

REMINISCENCES
OF A SISTER
S. FLORENCE EDWARDS



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E. G. KEMP



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FLORENCE AS A GIRL

[Frontispiece.]

REMINISCENCES OF A SISTER

S. FLORENCE EDWARDS, OF TAIYUANFU

BY

E. G. KEMP, F.R.S.G.S.

AUTHOR OF "THE FACE OF CHINA," ETC.

"The Soul identifieth itself with the wind which bloweth where it listeth, with the cloud and the mist that melt away in rain and are drawn up again into the air, and this sovereign energy of the soul, fluid, penetrating, ever-changing, took form in the symbolic Dragon."—LAURENCE BINYON. (See design on cover.)

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TO THE GLORIOUS MEMORY
OF MY DEAR FAMILY AND FRIENDS
IN THE CITY OF GOD

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PROLOGUE

THIS little volume is written chiefly for the family and friends of my sister, and is therefore of a very intimate nature. It is scarcely designed for the general public. Things too trivial to interest strangers are set down, because they help to complete the picture of my sister's character and life. This has been my object—so far, alas! from being attained—for how is it possible to describe so winning a personality, and the steadfast growth of soul which characterised her whole life? The task has been confided to me, because no one so well as a sister knows all the details of a life from its earliest days, but the very nearness of the relationship tends to dull the outlines of such a picture.

Most biographers err in one of two directions, either by ignoring the defects of the character portrayed, or by over-emphasising them. I have tried to avoid these mistakes, and to set down all her characteristics in correct proportion, not avoiding the criticism of those views which were in opposition to my own. What is most difficult to describe is the radiant brightness which won the love of all sorts of people and triumphed over every hindrance of physical disability. If the picture inspires any reader to a higher sense of the worth of life in the service of humanity, I shall be amply satisfied, but, even apart from that, the fact of spending so many hours in her dear company has been the greatest inspiration to myself and has increased my loving admiration for the best of sisters.

EMILY G. KEMP.

LONDON, 1919.

“ There is a great blessedness in having had ideals ; even though they have been imperfectly realised, though we have sometimes seen them and sometimes not, and though it is impossible to carry them with us into daily life, and the habits of the world have prevailed over them. Nor, indeed, would it be good for most of us, or within the limits of human nature, that we should be constantly in a state of spiritual exaltation. A few men of this temper there have been, and when such a temper is combined with a deep and unshaken moral conviction, they have been the authors of the greatest blessings to mankind.”—BENJAMIN JOWETT.

“ There is one way for thee ; but one ; inform
Thyself of it ; pursue it ; one way each
Soul hath, by which the infinite in reach
Lyeth before him ; seek and ye shall find ;
. . . O joy, joy, joy to fill
The day with leagues ! go thy way, all things say,
Thou hast thy way to go, thou hast thy day
To live ; thou hast thy need of thee to make
In the heart of others ; do thy thing ; yea, slake
The world's great thirst for yet another man !
And be thou sure of this, no other can
Do for thee that appointed thee of God.”

RICHARD WATSON DIXON.

CHAPTER ONE

CHILDHOOD

" The child, the seed, the grain of corn,
The acorn on the hill,
Each for some separate end is born
In season fit, and still
Each must in strength arise to work the almighty will."

R. L. STEVENSON.

SUSANNAH FLORENCE KEMP was born in Rochdale, in 1856, and was the third daughter of George and Emily Kemp. Her parents built a house there (" Beechwood ") into which they moved in the early spring of 1860. Here Florence lived with her four sisters, Jessie, Constance, Lydia and Emily, to whom a brother George was added in 1866, so that there were enough strong-willed young people to form a lively and disciplinary circle. The mother's theory was " bring up your eldest child most carefully, for the others will follow its example." The elder ones complained that they were much more strictly disciplined than the younger, but we younger ones stoutly denied it. Compared with the harsh discipline of that day, we were not unduly punished, but strict punctuality, truthfulness, obedience and good manners were exacted. The mother was most diligent in herself giving religious instruction, and on Sundays we had a Bible lesson, at which each one was expected to pray extempore; this was a severe trial even to

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Florence, who at that age considered it wrong to pray out of a book. On the rare occasions when she conducted family prayers, during the parents' absence from home, she suffered acutely on this account, especially if any cousins were present.

The mother always said that she noticed a remarkable change in Florence's life when she was only four years old, and from that time her whole heart was set on living the Christ-like life. She was hot-tempered and enthusiastic, capable of sharp jealousy, and endowed with a lively imagination and keen appreciation of the good things of life, but she obtained so complete a mastery of herself—even in childhood—that no one would have known these defects, had she not spoken of them, and unquestionably they were transformed into a source of strength and sympathetic helpfulness to her fellow-beings.

Our parents were both anxious that we should be good linguists, and have as thorough an education as possible, so we all learned French from a very early age, then German and Italian, but I regret to say, *not* Latin—it being still considered unnecessary for girls. Music, dancing and painting were pursued with more or less zeal, but the greatest attention was devoted to history, especially to English and French history, and politics were a continual subject of conversation, our parents and grandparents being keen politicians, numbering John Bright and Cobden among their intimate friends. Last, but not least of the studies of those days, was the absorbing topic of foreign missions, for our grandparents, as well as our parents, were enthusiastic adherents of the cause, and

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our youthful imagination was fired with stories of adventure as well as of heroism, told us by the missionaries themselves who frequented the two houses.

The great event of the year to us youngsters was the missionary dinner given by our grandparents on the occasion of the annual meetings in the town and district, to which were invited the neighbouring ministers of all denominations, for the family was always anxious to promote Christian unity, and made systematic efforts in that direction. How well I remember the preparations for the dinner!—the beautiful mahogany table, with its cut glass and silver reflected in the shining surface, and above all, the noble decanters of sherry and port, of which no small amount was consumed. After a very lengthy dinner, beginning at four o'clock, the whole party adjourned to West Street Baptist Chapel for the missionary meeting—by far the most interesting services that ever took place there in those days, and to which we went with great alacrity. The next day we were always invited by the grandparents to enjoy the remains of the feast, and we revelled in the resources of the old house as a playground, for we were treated by my grandmother with an indulgence which was a great contrast to the stern discipline with which she had brought up her own family. Some cousins actually succeeded in capturing her brown “front” hair one night, having vainly begged her to give it up in favour of her own snowy-white hair; the next morning she was with difficulty persuaded to come downstairs without it; but the wonderful transformation was so admired by everyone that soon she became reconciled to the change.

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Most of our Saturday half-holidays were spent at the "Butts," and we were allowed to play hide-and-seek in the adjoining warehouse, where there were delightful bins in which to hide behind bales of flannel, and little did we care about the wrath of the warehouse men who found big holes in the paper wrappings later on ! My grandfather had taken into the office and warehouse many of the chapel folk, so we felt on intimate terms with them, and it linked up the Sunday with the week-day to see "Jas" (the venerable deacon) with his "sheet" (he always had phenomenally big pocket handkerchiefs) come into chapel in decorous Sabbath clothes, or Thomas Holt raising the tune in a tentative manner, which involved searching for the right note amongst the surrounding ones. Every one was friendly and intimate as part of a family, taking a share in all that was going on ; if you didn't know the words of a hymn, you sang notwithstanding, so that one day it happened that the hymn came to an end while a childish voice rang out "and left their tails behind them."

During schoolroom days, Florence, Lydia and I were together for several years, under the care of a Swiss governess, who was quite a character. She was a remarkable old lady of pronounced opinions and varied experiences ; she argued with us on a wide range of subjects and helped to develop our minds. She was a rabid man-hater, and prayed continually that none of us might have the misfortune to get married, to the vexation of some members of the family ! We spent much of our time in the garden, and knew that she could always be placated with certain favourite flowers

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if we were late for lessons. We lived in a world of the imagination, and our chief joy was to listen to never-ending stories from Florence, who invented them as she went along ; but none of us could remember in later times what they were about. We revelled in "The Fairchild Family " and "The Thousand and One Nights " ; the latter was frequently read aloud to us by a prim old lady who never said the word "devil," but spelt it instead !

When she was eight years old, Florence felt that her life was too luxurious, and that she ought to prepare herself for the hardships of the life of service for God which she already foresaw. She therefore took a drawer out of a chest, and turning it upside down on the floor, slept on it instead of in her bed. How long she continued the practice I do not know, but she told this laughingly to a friend in China, and none of her family was aware of it.

We had a good many pets, and were all fond of animals ; we were taught to ride, first on a favourite donkey, and then on ponies of our own. Florence was quite fearless, and we were all expected to endure pain without crying, or even flinching. I saw her come into the nursery one day with knees all bleeding from the attack of a ram, which even the gardeners could not manage, but which she succeeded in putting out of the garden into the paddock. The discipline of having pets for which they are responsible, and which they must feed regularly, is valuable in the training of children. Every spring we were allowed to have a motherless lamb to bring up by hand, and it was a thrilling experience to go in search of one from farm to farm. I can

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still conjure up the scene—the preparation of the bottle, the feeling of it to see that the milk was not too hot, the straining of the eager lamb to get it, and its excitement when the teat reached its lips, the thrill of the soft, woolly little warm body, and finally the frantic waving of its long curly tail. All the summer long the lamb followed us about and shared in our games. Then there were the dogs to take out for those otherwise dull, decorous walks, and cats and birds, rabbits and pheasants, and later on monkeys and chameleons to cater for, not by any means an easy task. Do these things seem very trivial in the record of a noble life? To me they seem no unimportant part of the life training.

“ He prayeth best who loveth best,
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us
He made and loveth all.”

As a family we fortunately had the same inherited tastes, although in point of character we differed greatly from one another, so there was plenty of ground for argument and difference of opinion! From early days we were initiated into the sorrow and suffering of humanity. “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” made us realise something of slavery and its appalling misery; our parents took us to visit the sick, both in their homes and in the infirmary; we pricked texts for the blind every Sunday, and we often went to a ragged school built by my grandfather long before the days of Board schools.

Florence was hardly in her teens when she began to teach in the Sunday School. One day Jessie said it was

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quite time for her to begin, and taking her firmly by the hand, led her to Drake Street, where the dismayed child was given the Infant Class, as being, forsooth, the *easiest* to teach. Little did she foretell in those days that when she laid down her task of winning the Chinese in Tai-yuanfu to the truth of Christianity, one of her Sunday scholars would carry on the work there with great devotion, as the colleague of her son. Florence was baptized and joined the Church at the age of eleven. Many people are under the mistaken impression that Baptists are believers in *adult* as opposed to *infant* baptism, but that is entirely mistaking the point, the question of age being immaterial. The whole rationale of the matter is that Baptists hold baptism to be the personal act of faith of the individual, the responsibility for which cannot be undertaken by any other individual. This is the doctrine as they see it taught in the New Testament.

There is a fine description in Jowett's "Epistles of St. Paul," I, 291, of what baptism was in the first days: "I imagine not infants, but crowds of grown-up persons already changed in heart and feelings, their 'life hidden with Christ and God,' losing their personal consciousness in the laver of regeneration; rising again from its depths into the light of Heaven in communion with God and Nature, met as they rose from the bath with the white raiment which is 'the righteousness of the saints,' and ever after looking back on that moment as the instant of their new birth, of the putting off of the old man and the putting on of Christ. Baptism was to them the figure of death,

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burial and resurrection all in one, the most apt expression of the greatest change that can pass upon man, like to the sudden change into another life when we leave the body." Florence so strongly held this view, that she embodied it in a little romance, called "Laetitia," which she wrote when she was eighteen, and which her father had published. Some people consider it impossible to be wide-minded and charitable, and yet hold tenaciously to dogma, but this was emphatically the case with her. Florence was profoundly influenced by all her early training and took to heart more than anyone I ever met the suffering of humanity; indeed, the recital of some brutal deed would cause her to be physically sick; she regretted that our childhood should have been so early overshadowed, and took care that this should not be the case with her own children. She accepted the way of the Cross whole-heartedly, and with her to *know* was to *act*. To her generous, loyal nature, no sacrifice was too great, and her conception of giving was entirely based on how much the gift cost the giver. I vividly remember one Christmas, when she had worked upon Lydia's feelings and mine so that we agreed to give as presents the things we most prized. Bitter was my regret when the deed was done to discover that the recipient valued it not at all! I never ceased to long for my beloved bird book, but was far too proud to ask for it back, or ever to admit my longing. But Florence never went back in spirit on any generous deed, and always rejoiced to give what cost her most, and what cost much more than it appeared to do.

CHAPTER TWO

GIRLHOOD

A pity beyond all telling
Is hid in the heart of love."—YEATS.

FLORENCE left the home circle when she was fifteen to spend a few months studying French with some cousins under the care of a French lady at Braemar, and then went to school in the outskirts of London for a year. We all went there in turn, and although the ladies who kept it were most good and benevolent, we were under a tyranny, which no one so keenly resented as did Florence. Her love of freedom was outraged and her sense of the dignity of man could not tolerate the system of espionage that reigned there. Happily it had its comic side, as an illustration of which may be mentioned the following almost incredible fact. The school stood at a cross-road, and a policeman had his beat just in front of it. We were always strictly forbidden to look out of the window, but Miss D. went to the policeman and gave him half-a-crown to turn his back upon the school; while accepting the gratuity he said: "We are all steady married men, ma'am." Our letters home were all read, and when I begged to be allowed to go home because I was suffering from a series of abscesses owing to bad vaccine, I was told that the letter had been

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dictated by the devil, and it was torn up. We were known merely as numbers by the masters, and forbidden to speak to any of them. As a natural consequence we revelled in our Italian and German lessons, chattering to our hearts' content, as none of the governesses understood those languages. The dreary monotony of our schooldays, and the irritation of the pernicky regulations which harassed us from morning till night, were only rendered supportable by the real kindness of heart of the ladies, which often showed itself in strange ways ; for instance, on receipt of the long-expected news that our grandmother had passed away at the ripe age of eighty-four, we were supported by a dose of brandy and water arrowroot !

Religion only broke the monotony of our existence in the shape of attendance at the Metropolitan Tabernacle and Moody and Sankey's meetings, and Mr. Sankey even visited the school. Although Constance and Florence had left, they came back on a visit and did some of the house-to-house visitation for the mission. There was a painfully exotic spiritual atmosphere, and religious experiences were almost *de rigueur* amongst the pupils during the whole time I was at the school.

At the time that Florence left school, the whole family spent the winter (1874-5) at Cannes in a charming villa ; this was on account of my father's ill-health. It was our first journey abroad, and what a time of enchantment it was—the lovely country, the flowers, the sea, the people—everything so gloriously strange and vivid ; we walked, we drove, we picnicked, we sketched ; it was the beginning

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of a new life, almost. And yet the real motive power of Florence's life was not obscured, and the joy of life to which she responded so keenly was not allowed undisputed possession. The elder sisters decided to have a night-school for the ragamuffins who haunted the streets ; so a room was hired and the teaching began. It was no easy task, but they pulled through somehow, and spent two or three evenings a week at it. It helped us later on in a somewhat similar work at home, when we had a children's service on Sunday evenings for the slum children who disturbed the chapel folk at West Street. I don't know how much good it did them, but it certainly was an excellent school for training us. The boys were up to every trick and dodge for upsetting the speakers, and if you did not at once capture the attention of your audience, woe betide you ! The wildest hullabaloo ensued ; perhaps a mouse was let loose, and the girls were deliciously frightened, and jumped on the benches squealing, while the whole place resounded with cat-calls. Every resource was required to regain order, and not always could it be achieved. One noted legal light thought he would like to try his luck as a speaker there, and began : " Boys and girls—hmm—" The whole school cleared its throat ; he began again, " Boys and girls—hmm—" and again the school cleared its throat. For the third time he began, " Boys and girls—hmm—" This was too much for the audience, and only the opportune starting of a popular hymn saved the situation !

This kind of work, together with her tract district, parish visiting, meetings and classes, kept Florence fully

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occupied during the next two years, and she went on as well with her studies at home. Her devotion to the sick was remarkable, and to one case of a specially painful nature she gave unceasing care, unknown to the family ; she made herself truly “ the servant of all men for Christ’s sake.” During the parents’ absence abroad she installed the Ragged School teacher in the best bedroom in the house, though she was in an advanced state of disease, dressing the sores herself daily. She never made the slightest difference in her treatment of people in different ranks of society, and admitted all equally willingly to her inmost friendship. I do not think she felt the difference of birth, training, position or nationality any hindrance to intimacy.

It was at the age of sixteen that she first became deaf, and one can easily imagine what a shock that was to one so young, especially as mother’s deafness made us realise the hindrance it meant to social intercourse. The knowledge of it burst upon Florence quite suddenly when she was on a hillside in Switzerland. Constance said to her—“ Listen to the band down there in the valley,” and she could hear nothing ! From that time the deafness increased little by little, shutting her off from the life around, but drawing her ever closer to the inward life. She felt it very acutely at times, especially as a hindrance to her work, but her beaming sympathy and cheerfulness led people to make her their confidante notwithstanding. The doctors could do nothing to help her, and for a long time she was greatly concerned with the question of faith healing. Friends

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strongly urged her that it was the right thing, and I shall never forget her absolute confidence when seeking to carry out the injunction in James v. 14, although the elders could not be summoned, as they did not hold these views. Sore was her disappointment when no result followed, and she came to the conclusion that God now used other channels of healing, and that He had sent her this chastening for some wise purpose. Her faith remained undimmed, and she was as eager as ever to learn more of God's dealing with men.

It should be said that at a much later date she learned to see things rather differently, and gives a humorous account of a little illness and recovery from it in a letter from Taiyuanfu, August 2nd, 1888. "On Monday I was very poorly, and had my pulse felt I can't tell you how many times. It was almost amusing. First in would come Dr. Jessie, watch in hand, with a very serious face and feel it for about five minutes (she'll say this is an exaggeration, and perhaps I oughtn't to contradict my elder) and shake her head, and put out her tongue to make me put out mine (I being so deaf) and sit awhile, and go away. Then in comes Dr. Henry, and pulls out his watch and feels the pulse and nods his head, and points to the patient's tongue and says: 'Well! We'll just have a thermometer and try the temperature—no harm in it'—and sits awhile and goes away. Temperature turned out to be only 102°, but my head was pretty bad, so after dinner we followed the directions in James v., T. and H. anointing. In the afternoon I had on an iced water-cap,

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and it was oh ! so deliciously cool. The next morning I was quite well, and ever so much stronger. They said to me : ‘ Why, you look as well as you did a fortnight ago,’ which was just how I felt. It was a delightful surprise, for I hadn’t expected to be well all at once, as it only says ‘ the Lord *shall* raise him up,’ not quickly. Perhaps some would wonder at my going in for iced water, but it seems to me that Paul’s ‘ every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving,’ cannot but be applied to medicine and other remedies, and that our mistake has been in using these to the exclusion of the command, while some others make the opposite mistake.”

Florence was always an ardent student of the Bible, and read it with keenness and intelligence ; it was at this time that she came to the conclusion that it did not contain the doctrine of eternal punishment, and this was the greatest consolation to her sensitive spirit. With this one exception, she adhered closely to the rigidly orthodox views in which she had been trained, and she was much more interested in the emotional than in the intellectual side of religion. At the same time she always emphasised in her teaching that emotion—feeling—was a very secondary side to religion ; that it was an acceptance of the facts as revealed in the Bible, an effort of the will in giving oneself up to God, and then a life lived with Him, and accepting all He gives. She thought the line “and *try* His works to do ” implied a wrong attitude of mind, and she changed it in the family’s copies of “ Psalms and Hymns ” to “ *live* His works to do.”

GIRLHOOD

In 1876, Florence and Lydia went to school at Cannstadt, Germany, as parlour boarders for six months. They worked hard, thoroughly enjoyed it, but lived sparsely. Their German teachers were much impressed by their difference from all the other English girls, and became extremely fond of them, and especially admired Florence. Her radiant look arrested people's attention, and the professors found "there was much in her" (as they said) and "Sie ist unerlaubt gut" (she is undoubtedly good). Lydia was less gifted by nature, but of a rare sweetness, and with an indomitable determination to cultivate every gift she possessed, and to use every ounce of her capacity and strength for the welfare of mankind. She felt acutely that her teachers thought her stupid, and made slighting remarks about her—thereby showing their own lack of intelligence—for she became much above the average in culture and sound judgment. When the German ladies suggested that it would be a saving of expense for her to have a not first-rate teacher of singing, as her voice was not particularly good, Florence was indignant, and insisted upon securing the best possible training. No wonder the two sisters impressed their teachers, and I, alas! made but a sorry third when I went with Florence the following year: I was generally excluded from the Fräulein A.'s parlour, in which she was always welcome, and Lydia also. We made a couple of friendships common to all three of us, which even this bitter war could not sever, for it is a family tradition to be utterly loyal in friendship. "The friends thou hast and their adoption tried, grapple them

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to thy heart with hoops of steel." Americans have told me that this is a particularly British trait, and much more common here than in their country.

Florence and Lydia returned home from Germany in March, 1877, in time for our father's funeral ; he had died on the Nile after great and prolonged suffering, borne with a courage and cheerfulness which was a lesson to us all.

CHAPTER THREE

PREPARATION

“ Herein lies wisdom, beauty and increase ;
Without this, folly, age, and cold decay.”—SHAKESPEARE.

IN the autumn of 1877, our eldest sister, Jessie, a highly gifted and attractive creature, with an ardent appreciation of all the good things of life, renounced everything for the sake of devoting herself to foreign mission work, and she certainly made as great a sacrifice as is possible for any one to make, the more so as she was passionately attached to her mother, and each separation seemed harder than the previous one. At the close of the very last furlough, when she had a premonition of the coming doom, she knew not how to say good-bye, and nothing but mother's fortitude enabled her to carry it through ; but her grief was most poignant, and she would fain have left her boy in his grandmother's care, but his father refused to be parted from him. Many years later I met their servant out in China, and he told me how he begged to stay with them when they were taken prisoners by the Boxers, but she sent him away, saying : “ You have done all you possibly can for us, you must try and escape.” He had been profoundly touched by her anxiety for his welfare when she was nearing her Calvary.

Jessie sailed for India in the autumn of 1877, going

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under the auspices of the Baptist Zenana Mission as an honorary worker. For some time she was associated with Miss Thorn, a woman of remarkable ability, who still continues her labours, after more than forty years of active service ; she has won the high esteem of all Government officials, and was one of the first women to receive the Kaiser-I-Hind medal in recognition of her public service. Miss Thorn and Jessie decided to leave the house where they were living in the civil lines, and to take one in the native city (a most unheard-of proceeding in those days) close to the Maidan and within sight of those two wonderful buildings, the Jumma Musjid and the Fort. Here they started a girls' boarding school, taking in such waifs and strays as fell into their hands. When I was staying there twenty-five years later, a policeman brought in a babe which he had picked up by the river-side, and I was reminded of those hearts of pity, who must needs be in the midst of the sorrow they came to heal.

The fact of Jessie becoming a missionary quickened the interest of us all ; and had its effect upon Florence, although she was always most attached to Constance, with whom at that time she worked unremittingly. It was largely due to our mother's initiative that we had so many different kinds of religious work, and she was the soul of it all. To mention a few of her activities, of which she bore all the expense, she had (i) a Biblewoman, whom she sent to be trained at Mrs. Ranyard's Mission in London, (ii) annual suppers for the police, the railwaymen, the cab-drivers, and religious work in connection with them,

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(iii) mother's meetings, (iv) a lodging-house for single women, (v) a lads' club to try and save them from the temptations of slum life (more than 1,000 of these boys have served in the Army and Navy, and more than 100 have fallen in the war), (vi) a deaconess for nursing the poor in their homes, until a district nursing association was started in the town, (vii) a beautiful large coffee house which she built in the village of Sudden in 1880, quite near our house, to act as a social centre, where all sorts of meetings, concerts, etc., could be held. All these things were done so quietly and unobtrusively that even her nearest friends and relations were never aware of her large-hearted charities, and of the immense debt owed to her by her fellow townsmen.

The coffee house was the scene of much of our labour, and we had plenty of original characters who took part in the meetings, and often amused and edified us as much as we did them. There were great flights of eloquence sometimes; one speaker began thus: "Had I the voice of an Archangel, or the talent of the Miss Kemps." Even a prayer-meeting *may* have a humorous side, which does not detract from its spiritual value, and it is interesting to hear yourself prayed for as "the under-shepherdess of the sheep." A racy old Irishwoman, who said she had for many years previously prayed for the people who lived in the big house on the hill overlooking the village, made an interesting speech one day. She began by saying that mother reminded her of the good centurion, who built a synagogue, and who loved the nation. "Now Mrs.

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Kemp has built us a coffee house ; I'm not sure whether it's just like a synagogue, but she's done more than that. The Bible doesn't say that he gave them preachers as well, and that's what Mrs. Kemp has done for us." Needless to say, this referred to us four sisters. The present Feminist movement has had its foundations well and truly laid in *many* parts of our country by such women as my mother, who quietly and unostentatiously have been empire-builders of the best kind, and who have striven with no small measure of success to bridge over the social gulf, which alas ! still divides class from class. As there was only a small and ineffective Methodist Chapel, or rather school-house, in the village at that time, there was ample scope for all our efforts, and we had meetings, lectures, concerts, etc., each taking our own particular part ; to me fell the care of the men, and also the getting up of the concerts. I was much afflicted by a habit of blushing, and the men enjoyed seeing " our Em'ly " thus advertising her blunders ! We used to have interesting concerts ; good music, such as Beethoven quartets for violin, 'cello, harp and piano, always scored a success with this Lancashire music-loving audience. On one of these occasions when the harpist happened to be clad in a pale sea-green *décolleté* gown, one of the audience was overheard to remark : " Well, to be sure ! I never knew before what David looked like when he was playing the harp." And this was said in all seriousness.

From all this it will be seen that Florence's life was a pretty laborious one ; it held very little amusement, and

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she never cared much for games. Reading aloud was the main distraction, and as mother was very deaf, she was usually the reader, and a very good reader she was. We never went to dances, and this prevented our seeing much of other young people, except our cousins. As a poor woman whom I visited once aptly remarked : “ Well ! your mother didn’t bring you up for *show*, and you haven’t been much of a success.” On inquiring the exact meaning of the latter remark, she said : “ You’ve none of you got married.” This evidently spelt complete failure in her estimation !

All these varied activities helped to fit Florence for the great work before her, to which her gaze had long been turned. The reason why she had fixed on China as her future sphere of work was primarily on account of what she considered England’s deep disgrace for forcing the opium traffic on it. It would be hard to find anyone more keenly sensitive about national honour than she was ; even stronger than her passion for the welfare of souls was her outraged pride as a motive to give all that lay in her power to atone for the wrong done. It is only those who have come in personal contact with the Chinese that can really appreciate their feelings on this subject. Let me quote a detail about it from Dr. Harold Schofield’s memoir :

“ On one occasion a few weeks ago, when Mr. Pigott was preaching, I heard a man say : ‘ You had better explain to us the right and wrong of that opium business instead of preaching the Gospel to us.’ Mr. Pigott told him they had misused what was really a valuable drug by employing it as a daily stimulant.

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The man replied with bitter scorn : ' Yes, and nicely you foreigners have doctored us with your foreign medicine (opium). Look what a miserable lot we are.' This was by far the bitterest taunt I have heard here, whereas in South China such remarks are quite common. . . . Among the many hundreds of poor opium smokers who in the last two years have applied to me for help, I have not found one who has defended the habit. If, as some assert, opium smoking be an innocent luxury, why should thousands all over the empire be continually seeking help to give up the habit ?

" Will you all pray and work that this our national sin of forcing opium on the Chinese may speedily be abandoned by England ? "—*Memorials of Harold Schofield*, pp. 214, 217-18.

She was profoundly stirred by all national movements, and on one of her foreign trips met Garibaldi, whom our father had long known. Our annual holidays, when we grew up, were always spent in foreign travel (mother did not miss going abroad once in over forty years), and we frequently went off the beaten track, so that we were encouraged to study different races and their conditions of life. Germany, France, Austria, Switzerland, Corsica, Italy, Algeria, were visited, and she saw everything with eager inward, as well as outward vision. On these tours she never lost sight of opportunities of "spreading the Gospel " by distributing tracts and Testaments, and by conversation she did her utmost to interest all those with whom she came in contact ; but she never committed the egregious blunder (so common in those who distribute tracts) of doing it at random, and without reading them beforehand, so as to judge of their suitability. Her sense of humour made her laugh heartily at receiving a tract called, " Are You

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a Smoking Disciple ? ” which a pious lady had enclosed in a letter of condolence on the death of her dearest first-born ! On the same occasion another friend wrote saying that she had asked the Lord to make up for the great sorrow by sending her *twins* ; with a twinkle in her eye, Florence told this to a friend, adding “ I really think, D——, that it wasn’t quite fair to do so without consulting me first.”

By this time Florence had attained a rare maturity and perfection of character. Taking as the standard St. Paul’s description of Christian love, I go over the details one by one, and each I find absolutely fulfilled in her ; it is her living portrait :

“ Love is patient and kind.

Love knows neither envy nor jealousy.

Love is not forward nor self-assertive, nor boastful and conceited.

She does not behave unbecomingly, nor seek to aggrandise herself,

Nor blaze out in passionate anger, nor brood over wrongs.

She finds no pleasure in injustice done to others,

But joyfully sides with the truth.

She knows how to be silent.

She is full of trust, full of hope, full of patient endurance.

Love never fails.”—I Cor. 13, 4-8.

WEYMOUTH’S *New Testament in Modern Speech.*

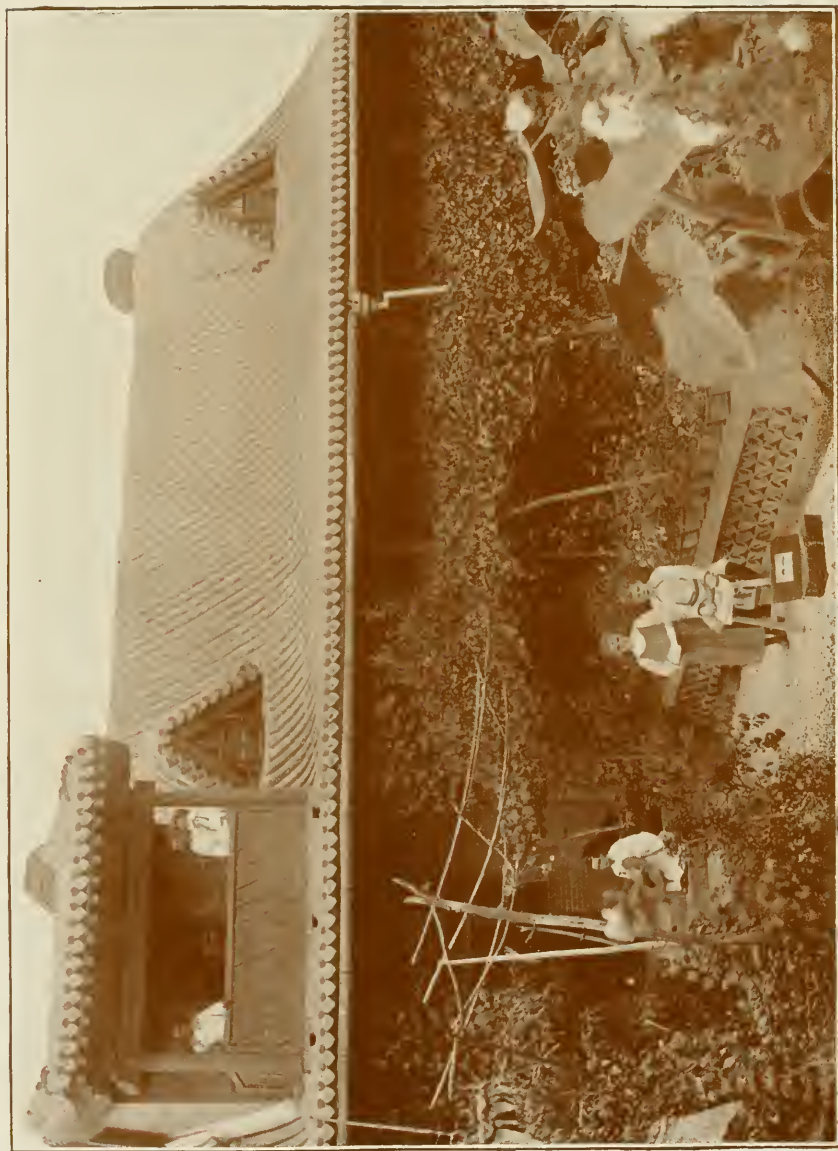
If any chance to read this book who did not know my sister, they will naturally consider this an exaggeration, but it will not seem so to anyone who knew her, least of all to her most intimate circle. I have before me a letter written by her to one who was most disloyal to one of her

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sisters, and it is wonderful to see how her burning indignation against the deceitful behaviour described in it is tempered with pleading affection for the individual. She had too deep an abhorrence of sin for her to tolerate it in silence, but she none the less loved every human being, and was far too ready (in my opinion) to accept every one at his own valuation, especially the ultra pious folk with whom she was constantly in touch from the time she went to China. Her judgment was not so sound as it might have been had she developed the critical faculty which she undoubtedly possessed, but she would not allow herself to question anyone's sincerity.

Jessie was invalided home from India after three years' service, and the doctor forbade her return. When her health was re-established, Florence persuaded her to go with her to China instead, and they both with equal ardour made ready to start. Florence took three months' training at the London Hospital, but was very disappointed at the little teaching she got. From her journal it is clear that she was very interested in the work, and would have profited by good teaching ; she came in contact with much sickness, but seems to have been left to her own resource to know how to deal with it very often, no doubt a useful training for a would-be missionary, who must be always prepared for all sorts of emergencies, and who should be a walking encyclopædia if possible ! Of course, things are very different nowadays in our big hospitals from what they were at that time.

They sailed for China in October, 1882.



THE OLD HOME AT TAIYUANFU

CHAPTER FOUR

LIFE IN CHINA, 1882-89

"Man with his burning soul
Has but an hour of breath
To build a ship of truth."

MASEFIELD.

JESSIE and Florence applied to the Baptist Zenana Mission to go out to China as honorary workers for that Society (as the former had previously been when she went to India, see p. 26), but owing to the strongly expressed disapproval of a senior B.M.S. missionary who thought it inadvisable for single ladies to work in the interior, and also owing to the fact that the one lady the Mission had sent out a few years previously had promptly got married, their offer was declined. However, one of our cousins, Dr. Harold Schofield, was working in connection with the China Inland Mission at Taiyuanfu, and he urged them to come out, promising to give them all assistance; so they decided to go there, and it was the scene of Florence's labours during nearly thirty years. One of the B.M.S. missionaries went down to the coast to escort them up, as it was impossible for new-comers to undertake the journey up country alone.

The first part was done in a little house-boat up the river Peiho and its tributary to Paoting-fu;

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then by litter across the plains of Chihli and into Shansi—a distance of some four hundred miles. The litter is a horrible method of travel; it is a box slung between two mules, and generally of such uncertain construction that it may drop to pieces by any rough handling, and sways about like a ship in a storm. Given that the front mule is a kicker, you may in a couple of moments have nothing between yourself and him, and it is impossible to jump out, as that would overturn the litter. On one occasion the whole of the floor suddenly fell out, and Florence found herself on the dusty road between the hoofs of the mules. My experience generally was that one or other of the mules fell down at least once a day, and the jar to one's spine was extremely unpleasant.

The Shansi high road is thronged with carts, mules carrying lumps of coal or bales of goods, litters, men on horseback, imperial runners with their yellow insignia, long strings of camels tied head of one to tail of the next, often accompanied by their baby camels, and always with a little donkey to head the procession, and finally innumerable foot passengers. The dust of the road soon covers the traveller from head to toe, and in March (the month in which the sisters reached Taiyuanfu), dust storms continually sweep over the plains, and then the traveller is completely covered with dust, so that he becomes literally unrecognisable, and can see nothing, as in a dense fog. The journey across the Shansi border is much more interesting, however, as it consists of a series of high ridges surmounted by "heavenly gates," at

altitudes rising to nearly five thousand feet. The road in many places is paved and often steep and slippery, so that before the ascent men offer prayers for a safe journey, and burn sticks of incense. But this is by no means the main peril of the road, for you descend into deep valleys, where the way lies perhaps between cliffs of loess one hundred feet in height. One day Florence and I were passing quietly along this very road when a thunderous clap behind us made me start, and turning, I saw a pillar of dust rising up into the sky, and when it cleared away we saw that the cliff had fallen right across the path on which we had been walking not five minutes earlier. In rainy weather the danger is very great, and, although there are little caves of refuge in the cliffs, travellers are frequently drowned by a sudden torrent sweeping down the gullies before they can reach a place of safety.

After crossing the four "heavenly gates," north, south, east and west, you eventually reach the wide, fertile plain, which in the summer is a marvel of beauty, with, alas, in those days, its acres of puce-coloured or scarlet poppy, as well as sorghum, millet and other crops. Toward the north of this plain lies the city of Taiyuanfu, the capital of the province of Shansi.

Dr. and Mrs. Schofield welcomed the sisters and had prepared for them a house in their own compound, where they quickly settled down to study the language. Despite her deafness, and its great difficulty, Florence soon got a good mastery of it ; unlike European languages, which one picks up instinctively as one goes along, I found that

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Chinese was not to be learnt at all in that way, and also that it varied greatly as regards pronunciation even in places no farther than fifty miles apart and in the same province ; such a common word as "water " being different at Shouyang, from that used at Taiyuanfu. Florence had been warned before coming out that her deafness would probably be greatly aggravated by the climate, but having decided that God had called her to the work, nothing could deter her from it. Life would be simpler to all of us if we had such a realisation of its definite meaning, producing a unity of purpose from beginning to end despite its varying circumstances. Thomas Erskine said : " I am not more sure of my own existence than I am of being under the eye and guidance of a Being who desires to train and educate me."

Jessie was a keen linguist, but still keener on medical work, and she found ample scope in helping Dr. Schofield and learning from him, so that she was able to carry on some of his work after his premature death from typhus on August 1st, 1883 (the same year). The sisters were the only people available to nurse one of the C.I.M. missionaries who was severely wounded in a fight with robbers in the month of May ; he did not recover for several months, and as was not unnatural, fell in love with his head nurse and married her shortly afterwards. They lived at the hospital and carried on the work as best they could till a new doctor was appointed—Dr. Edwards. Meanwhile, Florence went to live in the girls' school, with a missionary whom she found very congenial, and began her work among the

Chinese alone, often going with a Chinese Biblewoman to stay in the villages, and getting to know them in their homes. She led a life of considerable privation, and passed through a period of much mental stress, but she won the love of the Chinese, who saw her whole-hearted devotion and got to know her more intimately than would have been possible in any other way.

We felt considerable uneasiness at home about her, well knowing that she would lead a life of Spartan simplicity, so I decided to offer myself as her companion for a time, and the following letter is her answer; it gives a good picture of her attitude of mind :

“ Taiyuanfu,

“ 26th October, 1883.

“ I have been dreaming of home the last four nights, I suppose from its being just a year since we bade you all good-bye. . . . I think the year has gone very quickly out here; it has certainly been wonderfully full of incidents, but I do not know as much as I had hoped of Chinese. To-day I have set to work again with the teacher for the first time since our return.

“ I think Miss K. and I shall get on very well together, for we are pretty much of the same mind on various subjects of household economy, especially tidiness and clearing out useless things. We have had a regular turn-out since the others left, and things are beginning to get into order, but the painters are so dilatory, I don't know how long it will be before we get settled in our own rooms. [Being very active and energetic herself, she was always tried by the Eastern waste of time.] Yesterday they did not come at all, being, we were told, occupied at home in the preparation of materials (a mixture of pig's blood and something else which they put on before the paint, instead of oil), which they would put on

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very quickly to-day. I wish you could see them at their 'very quick work' ! They only came about midday, and left at 5.30, before dark, occupying part of the intervening time in smoking and eating. The brickwork which runs round the room, about three feet high, is being painted, and the wooden screen separating the bedroom from the sitting-room.

"Sunday evening. Yesterday evening the longed-for messenger arrived, bringing us a magnificent budget of letters [There was no post at this time, and the missionaries had to send down to the coast for letters until so late as 1903] . . . we had had no news since September 3rd. Miss K. and I had invited Jessie and Tom to tea and our Saturday prayer meeting, after which they intended going back immediately to practise hymns with the Chinese for to-day. However, Tom making his appearance with Liu-kan and the letter-bag, a message was sent over to say there would be no practice—and *how* we enjoyed the letters ! As usual, words fail me to express a tithe of the thanks I would for the love of which I feel *so* unworthy. It seems queer to write that home to one's own sisters and mother, but it's just what I feel. And I love you, oh, so deeply, and wish I could be to you all the help and joy you are to me. My letters, too, seem so poor and inadequate beside your full and interesting ones.

"And now as to your offer—*would* I like to have you here ? To that question there could not possibly be any answer but one, but if that 'Yes, a thousand times yes,' would bring out my beloved sis 'subito' (= at once), I should pause before giving it. I would not have you, darling, come out on my account, though if you felt called to give up your work at home for work here, it would, I need scarcely say, be an immense pleasure to me to have you. In our Mother you have the wisest of earthly counsellors, and He to whose unerring wisdom you submit all, will, I know, not suffer you to take a wrong step. Oh, my darling sis, I do thank God for you. I do not know why, but I have felt we have been specially drawn together lately, particularly during the last journey I was thinking

much of you. Your dear little forget-me-not is treasured with Con's sweet sketch of Naples. Good-night. 10.15 p.m.

“ October 30th.

“ I don't know how to thank you for all the presents ; it was exquisite delight opening the box all redolent with love. (Pussy has just sprung upon the table and put her paw upon the wet ink, so excuse the smudge. She and the dog are most amusing together. At first he was very much afraid of her ; she had such a neat way of slapping him in the face with her paw ; now he has discovered that he can jump upon her, and roll her over if she happens not to be within reach of a chair—oh, Puss ! Another spring right upon my paper ! Still, they are very good friends, and often give us a laugh by their games.) . . . You all give me a great deal too much sympathy. I am very happy, and the present arrangement I like very much, as I am so near to J. and T. that I can see as much of them as our duties permit, and for meals and that sort of thing two are better company than three for a deaf person.

“ I was going to have said on Saturday night (only I had finished my paper and was very sleepy) that I really don't feel to need anybody. I am not lonely, though I often long for you every one.”

I quote this *in toto*, because it expresses her life-long attitude of humility and self-depreciation, and of attachment to all her family.

Extracts from a letter to E. C. K. :

“ Tien Lung, Shan,

“ July, 1884.

“ I often reproach myself, as you do, for the small amount of praise and thanksgiving in my life, when it ought just to be overflowing with gratitude, but instead of bewailing our thankless hearts, I think we will rejoice that we need be

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ungrateful no longer. We will look onward, not backward ; upward, not inward. Supposing we have a month of thanksgiving ? As September contains both our birthdays, I don't know that we could do better than choose it. As, however, this cannot reach you before the 7th, we might carry our month over into October, which will be all the better, as it will include L.'s birthday. . . . I think it would be more pleasing to our loving Master if we took Him at His word and treated Him as being what He is, a mighty Helper with regard to all the infirmities (even sinful infirmities) of our flesh and spirit. I need this advice even more than you do, but that shall not hinder me from giving it to you. He is able to succour. He came to succour the tempted. If we had not been poor and weak and sinful, compassed with infirmity, what reason would there have been for Him to come ? Let us not—oh, we must not—be of the many who disappoint him in their non-acceptance of His love and grace in its fullness. I don't know, but I have, after all, been writing more to myself than to you. I do thank God for His sustaining grace, which *will* perfect that which concerneth us.

“ Another thing, ‘ our house of this tabernacle ’ is of the Chinese type—the windows don't boast a great deal of glass, and are but on one side. When it is dissolved there will be nothing for evermore, nothing to shut us out from the full radiance of the sunshine of God's presence. ‘ In Thy light we shall see light. ’ ”

Florence took a great interest in the schoolgirls, and helped Miss L. as far as she was able, and even offered, in the spring of 1884, to undertake entirely the responsibility of the school, for there were great difficulties as to staffing it ; but it was not the kind of work which really appealed to her, and her deafness would have been a great drawback in a task requiring the utmost keenness of all the faculties.

Fortunately, Mr. Hudson Taylor declined her offer (as she supposed), though a year later he wrote *accepting* it. She was not only surprised, but disappointed, and writes in the following terms : " February 5th, 1885. I was tempted to feel a little sorry on receiving the letter, for, of course, when I made the offer it was with the expectation of the P.'s (her sister and brother-in-law) staying here. But I see this is merely a little selfish dislike to being tied to the place and to one work, for all the main reasons for undertaking the school remain unchanged, and this very plain direction coming just at a time when I have been so anxiously asking for guidance is something to be most thankful for." Things turned out differently, however, and she never took up school work.

The China Inland Mission appointed Dr. Edwards to take up the medical work at Taiyuanfu in the place of Dr. Schofield, and he reached there in the spring of 1884. He was practically in sole charge of the medical work for the next sixteen years, with only intermittent help from time to time. The various other missions in the province (the area of which was larger than the whole of England and Wales) relied mainly on him for medical and surgical care during the whole of that time, and all important cases were brought, if possible, to Taiyuanfu for treatment. Very soon after his arrival he got to know and appreciate Florence, and they were married on the 9th of May, 1885. It was a marriage of singular happiness and usefulness for both of them. They were at the beck and call of the whole community, whether Chinese, or European, or American ; the house was seldom empty of guests, and they rarely, if

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ever, sat down to a meal by themselves. In one letter she says it is the first meal they had had alone for over four months, and as they remarked on the fact and wondered how long it would be before other guests arrived, the servant came in to announce that Mr. F. was at the door with his luggage. Considering her deafness and the fact that in Chinese houses you can hear from one end to the other without the slightest difficulty, on account of the paper windows and partitions, it will be seen that the situation called for some self-denial! Not only for physical ills did missionaries from Sweden, America, Norway and England flock to their hospitable roof, but for spiritual succour and aid of every kind—aid which was never refused, though sometimes given at a great cost. Dr. Schofield's brilliant gifts had won him a widespread reputation, and happily Dr. Edwards was fully equal to carrying it on; both were admirable linguists and preachers, so that they were leaders in the Church as well as in medical work. Soon it was felt necessary to build a hospital in place of the native house which had been used for that purpose, and this was done without any funds being contributed by the society. While the doctor attended to the men, my sister attended to the women patients and treated the cases that were within the scope of her capacity, the rest being referred to the doctor. These were happy days and if the progress of the work seemed sometimes disappointingly slow, a buoyant faith inspired their hearts to look forward to the reaping in due season.

In the following year their happiness was completed by

the birth of a son, Henry, and her favourite sister, Constance, went out for the event, arriving shortly after he was born. Florence felt very keenly how important a side of mission work is the example of a Christian home ; she felt that on this account, if for no other, celibate missions are a mistake, so she always encouraged the Chinese ladies to come into her house and see what an English home was like. It was a pretty sight to see a party of them, arrayed in every colour of the rainbow, come tottering on their wee feet across the garden, and they stayed for hours and hours.

As an instance of this, I quote from one of her letters, written on the eve of starting for England : “ Patients and visitors come in ever-increasing numbers, and the latter I have to see . . . Mrs. E. and I spent the morning in calling among others on Wang-tai-tai, where G. and E. were highly delighted by the gift of three pigeons, which they would scarcely let go out of their arms for a minute. On our return to dinner we found the bedroom occupied by Feng-tai-tai, her daughter-in-law and grandson, who was making fine havoc of some toys Edith had given me to take home. They had come ‘ to spend the day ’—also Chou-nai-nai, a Manchu. There was nothing for it but to ask them all to dinner, or we couldn’t have ours ; so H. and Mr. S. had their dinner in a side room, and we women and baby-kind had ours in the dining-room. I was very much afraid my two small fowls wouldn’t suffice the ten of us (eight grown-ups) but happily everybody seemed well ‘replenished’—as Mr. Aldis used to say, and like the contents of the widow’s cruse, there was some left.” In

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order to get time to write this letter she had taken refuge in the photographic room among "trays and pitchers and bottles and slop-pail and negatives," while one of the missionaries had replaced her in the sitting-room full of "tai-tais" and other women.

There is much that corresponds in our home life to the best side of Chinese idealism, and frequently Chinese students have said to me that on this account especially they thought it preferable to get their education here rather than in America. Missionaries cannot be too careful about the home atmosphere which they create, and which can only be rightly created with much thought, and prayer, and self-discipline. The Chinese are fond of children, and will be at once favourably impressed towards "the doctrine" if they see our children obedient, truthful and well-mannered. They lay great stress on training, though sometimes it shows itself in a strange, superstitious way, as for instance, in teaching children, as soon as ever they begin to speak, to say all the foulest words in the language. On hearing a missionary's child speaking at a singularly early age, a Chinaman enquired: "Does she speak good words or bad? We always teach ours bad words." They watch our actions with a truly appalling insight, and if we are weighed in the balance and found wanting, our teaching goes for nothing, and we had far better pack up and go home! When the table boy suggests that such and such a missionary doesn't *read* much, or that a certain child has his *father's* temper, it means at least twenty-five per cent. off his influence!

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Florence was devoted to her children, and more interested after her marriage in their training than in any other subject. For many years she studied diligently the *Parent's Review*, and went in a good deal for the theories discussed in it. But it must not be thought that this in any way interfered with her missionary work! She always seemed to feel that having offered her life unreservedly to God for this purpose, it must always retain the first place. She once told her daughter that she came to the conclusion after her marriage as soon as she had a family, that she must renounce the "*joie de vivre*" and henceforth devote herself entirely to it and to her work. By that I think she meant mainly culture, for she had a great love of reading, and I vainly besought her to indulge it a little more, urging the duty she owed both to herself and to others of enriching her mind. She spent so much of her scant leisure in writing letters to people, and doing things for them, who really had no claim on her—some even she had never seen—but she would smile indulgently at my remonstrances, admit there was some truth in the argument, but continue her self-sacrificing labours just the same. Whether she liked or disliked a person made not a jot of difference, and she treated all with whom she came in contact with equal courtesy and consideration.

Our faithful old nurse could not bear to see her being imposed upon, and vehemently denounced a certain lady. Florence told her she should really pray for Christian charity (she was a most earnest Christian). "Never!" was the indignant rejoinder, "she's the most impudent

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woman I ever set eyes on.” I confess I felt much sympathy with her point of view. We frequently argued the subject of missionaries who had mistaken their vocation. A visit to the doctor was such a good excuse for shirkers to leave their posts, and I felt that for the sake of the Chinese, no less than for their own sakes, they ought to be firmly dealt with. Every mission suffers from getting the wrong people sometimes, but as soon as it becomes apparent that a mistake has been made, I hold that the missionary should at once be withdrawn, no matter how difficult it may be. It is not a case of Christian charity when it means encouragement given to an injurious element in a community.

At the same time, missionaries who fail to keep their engagements simply because they change their minds, do a grave injury to Christ’s cause. For this reason it seems a mistake to persuade young people to go out as missionaries—working upon their feelings and emotions; rather we should obey our Master’s injunction, “ Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that *He* send forth labourers into His harvest.” There is no authorisation for us to take this grave responsibility on our shoulders; the call must come from within, and if the needs of humanity are adequately set before the Church, the response will not be lacking.

Constance spent nearly a year in China, and it was of great value to Florence, as well as a great happiness, to have her. She was far from strong, and was thereby relieved from a certain part of her anxieties. Writing home from a temple in the hills, where they had gone for a change in the hot weather while her husband was away on a journey, she says :

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" The Pagodas,

" July 24th, 1886.

" MY DEARLY LOVED MOTHER,

" It seems an age since last I addressed a letter to you. What are you thinking of me? That long separation is cooling my love? . . . I never more wished to write than lately, and never has it seemed less in my power. I have next to no energy and the little I do possess has to be expended on hosts of what I should call trifles, if I were not sure that God sends them because they are necessary to my training. The verse for to-day in our Roll Text Almanac is ' In all things more than conquerors,' and that is very helpful to me (though I can't say I have attained as yet), because without these difficulties and temptations and worries to try one there would be no possibility of becoming even conquerors.

" Here we have got into a little haven of comparative rest, for Mrs. R. has most kindly undertaken the housekeeping, and of course there are no patients to be attended to, nor guests to entertain. Our rooms are very pleasant, and much cooler than in the city; the one I am writing in, our dining-room, a corner of which is curtained off for Mrs. R. and Miss B.'s bedroom, is about forty feet long and quite twenty high, with domed roof. C., Baby and I sleep in a small room at the end, and I can't tell you how useful the bassinet has been [sent out from home]. Dear old Con has obtained a feather from a fowl and, having opened a bottle of eau de Cologne, is tempting me away to an easy chair, so good-bye for the present (you see I am having a real holiday), and it is just delightful to be able to enjoy a little of her sweet society, and write to you not in a great hurry. . . . Baby is such a dear little fellow; if you could only see him! I think he is very impressionable. It is such a comfort to me that you are praying for him; if only his heart may be always guarded by the presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him.

" This afternoon I read Gladstone's first Irish speech *pro bono publico*, Baby meanwhile reclining in an easy chair

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opposite and manifesting his very decided approval by sundry cheers and bursts of laughter, really and truly called forth by the speech, though he didn't succeed in sitting out quite the whole. He is evidently a very good Liberal, you will be glad to hear."

"August 3rd.

"Dear Baby has been so poorly the last few days as to require the most of our attention. To-day he was so much better that my heart grew quite light, then about nine o'clock he had a dreadful fit of crying and wheezing with no apparent reason."

After describing the remedies used, she continues :

"You will rejoice to learn that 'through the good hand of our God upon us' these means have been effectual, and to-day (5th) he is almost himself again. Your own heart will furnish you with a key to my feelings of the last few days. You will know what a comfort and help it has been to me to have such a dear sister as Constance with me. Mrs. R. and the B.'s have been *most* kind. Yesterday I saw the condition of successful prayer in quite another light from ever before : ' *must* believe that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him '—not a promise to be accepted or not as one pleases, but a blessedly peremptory command. And He *is* a rewarder, as we have proved to-day. My heart overflows."

The joy of that mother-love was soon to be quenched, for the following year her precious little baby died from smallpox, it having been impossible to get satisfactory lymph for vaccination. The Chinese, who greatly admired this fair-haired child (such a contrast to their own) gathered round the little sleeping form in wonder at the peaceful smile still lingering on his lips, and said, "Ours don't look

like that when they die." They were told of the Divine Love, which gathers the lambs in its arms and carries them in its bosom.

A few days later Florence wrote: "Now we have returned to our old room—so sadly changed without the little occupant whose presence was its sunshine, but God is *very* good and enables us to look on the bright side: Our Father's house is one, and we must not want our darling down from the fresh sunny rooms above to our comparatively dark and stuffy basement. Our work complete, one moment will take us up the shining steps to where we shall find him all radiant in the presence of the King."

On March 17th (her father's birthday) she wrote: "It is very sweet to think that the eldest and the youngest of our loved ones, their birthdays but one day apart, have been spending them together. Do you think people remember their birthdays in Heaven, or is there nothing to mark the lapse of time? Have these ten years (since father's death) seemed very long to you, dear mother? You never speak of your sorrow, but you must long very yearningly for the hour of reunion." This was indeed the case, and I remember one of the rare occasions when the veil was lifted, and the awe inspired in me by the depth of her love and suffering. The one of necessity exacts the other, and the training in self-sacrifice is the great quickener of love. During all her life Florence was given to heart-searching introspection, and no doubt at this time her sense of loss moulded her character to yet greater sympathy and understanding with suffering humanity.

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The following year she writes to Constance from the Pagodas, where they had spent such a happy, though chequered, time together :

“ June 20th, 1887.

“ Though it is not your turn for a letter, I can't help writing a few lines from this spot, where we spent those two or three happy, restful weeks together last year. We came up on Saturday, and almost every step of the way was full of memories of you and the sweet lamb who has left us. At first it seemed more than I could bear, but yesterday morning God gave me peace again ; if He gave up His Son for us to anguish and shame and death, should I not thankfully give mine to joy and glory and eternal life ?

“ How I should love to have you here now ! But perhaps next year we shall be together at home—*all* together. We have such cause for encouragement and joy in the work, and you will be delighted to hear that last Sunday, when I told Sung-da-Sao and Mao-tan how you were daily praying for them and longing for their conversion, they both said they would then and there become disciples. Poor I, little-faith, could hardly believe it ; it seemed too good to be true, and too wonderful after all these years of waiting. But ‘ it is the Lord's doing,’ and He who has saved will keep. ‘ They shall be holden up, for the Lord will make them stand.’

“ ‘ Yes, I rest *in Thee, Beloved,*
Know what *wealth* of *grace* is Thine.’

“ I like so to ring the changes on that line.

“ ‘ Know what wealth of *power* is Thine,
Know what wealth of *love* is Thine.’

“ Now our constant prayer is that every one of the converts may be filled with the Spirit. Do we need emptying first ? Well, He is able for that, and able to make *all* grace abound.

LIFE IN CHINA, 1882-89

"One thing I have been wanting to write about a good while, only in the city there is not much opportunity for writing leisurely, and one can't write in a hurry on things one feels much about. I am so enjoying this little rest, and if you want to picture me now you can do so, on a comfortable camp stool chair in the shade. . . . You will remember how, last year, we were a good deal exercised as to whether our many comforts and luxuries (in the eyes of the Chinese) might not be rather a hindrance to the spread of the Gospel. This feeling deepened, yet we did not know what to give up, so that at last we were led to pray that God would Himself take away whatever hindered our efficiency; if the removal of anything, or all that we had, would advance the Kingdom the least little bit, of course we *could* only be thankful to renounce it. We thought only of material possessions, but I believe it was in answer to this prayer that God took our darling, our one treasure, and it is a comfort now to believe this.

"In the beginning of a work especially it is of course of supreme importance that it be carried on upon apostolic lines—not that any other mood would be advisable afterwards—I need scarcely say that no such thought ever entered our minds—but if the foundations are true and firm, there is less fear for the superstructure. The law of Christ and His Church is self-sacrifice, and this is what we are trying to teach our converts, and there is a capital opportunity for it in the building of the chapel; but how can we urge them to give when it means a denial for some of them even to the necessities of life, if we retain our luxuries and ornaments? The difficulty is that the things we might dispense with are gifts, and I feel a gift is so sacred that I would rather deny myself of food than part with it; to sell it seems sacrilege. However, I think our duty is becoming clear. A few Sundays ago I was talking to my class about the Macedonian Church and generosity, with the application 'see that ye abound in this grace also,' and finished by saying 'the Doctor and I have been thinking that we have things we could do without, which if they were sold

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would help to build the chapel. The difficulty is that they are the gifts of friends, and we are afraid that when we go home our friends will ask where they are, and say, "What ! you have *sold our presents.*" And then we shall blush and not know where to look.' They quite saw the case, and laughed. 'But we can give them for Christ's sake,' I said, 'and we want you to give what you can.' The converted tai-tai thinks she knows some ladies who will buy, but I will tell you what things go, as they are disposed of. Of course, we don't want it talked about, but you all ought to know, especially so as not to send us out things. What I felt most about giving up was your lovely cloth. I felt I couldn't let that go ; it has been such a pleasure to us all this year, both as table-cover and quilt. They all know how much I prize it, so perhaps that is a good reason why that should be the first to go. I know you would be willing if it helps even one Chinese to learn self-sacrifice, and it is a great comfort to us to feel quite sure that you will all fully understand and acquiesce in this step. We don't expect the things to realise their full money value, but that is not of primary importance."

It is unnecessary to add that the house did not abound in what could by any stretch of imagination be called *luxury*, for I have a vivid recollection of the requisitioning of blankets, rugs and even pillows, when the house was extra full of visitors, and there was not a scrap of unnecessary furniture. This letter shows very plainly the two kinds of crucifixion of the Christian—the one self-imposed, the other God-sent, both necessary for the growth of soul.

"And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence

For the fulness of the days ? Have we withered or agonised ?

Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might issue thence ?

Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony might be prized ?

LIFE IN CHINA, 1882-89

Sorrow is hard to bear and doubt is slow to clear,

Each sufferer says his say ; his scheme of the weal and woe ;
But God has a few of us whom He whispers in the ear."

They proposed to go home on furlough in the following year, 1888, but for various reasons this was not possible, and in June another little son was born to them, George Kemp Edwards, who has been called to fill his father's old post as doctor at Taiyuanfu, and has carried on with thorough ability and devotion the family tradition. His mother lived to see her prayers and heart's desire fulfilled in this.*

* See Epilogue—p. 123.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BURDEN AND HEAT OF THE DAY

"They shall not labour in vain ; nor bring forth for trouble ; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord."

It was in the eighth year after leaving home that Florence returned, and her longing for it was tinged with keen regret at leaving her loved work. She had written : " I want terribly to see you all again, but how I shall manage to tear myself away from those poor heathen, and especially from the Christians, I do not know . . . Oh ! it is a sad, sad place to live in—opium smoking, squalor and dirt, but I won't distress you by a description. At Mr. B.'s suggestion we are going to pray for fifty converts (real working ones) this summer. He said : ' Well, if you get fifty converts you won't want to go home next year.' 'No,' said Mr. H., 'it will be like home-coming to you, won't it ? ' Not just the same, I thought, though if it were right I might be able to give up home. Well ! God will guide. I went to an opium-smoking case, the first I have been to. A gentleman's wife, who was scolded by her mother-in-law for lying in bed late in the morning, immediately ate over an ounce of opium, but denied having taken any, though afterwards, in a fit of anger, she said



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ROBERT A. EDWARDS

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that if the foreigners cured her it wouldn't matter, as she would cut her throat. She was pretty well under the effect of opium when I arrived, and the emetics didn't seem much good, so we dosed her with coffee and sal volatile, which she highly resented, spitting it out upon us! She had a fearful temper, poor thing. We kept her marching up and down, and then H. came and gave her atropin hypodermically, and when we left she was in a fair way for recovery."

They travelled back to England via Canada, and on the journey she writes thus :

" St. Lawrence River
(on the journey home),
July 18th, 1898.

" Now we are leaving Canada my feelings are a sort of earnest of what I anticipate having should I be spared to 'sixty or seventy years of age. I should know I must be nearing the end of the pilgrimage—a pilgrimage full of unmerited mercies, and comfort, and all kinds of help, and much joy and brightness, yet withal somewhat toilsome. And the prospect in front? Beyond words of mine to write about; only God be thanked for it!"

Her joy in reaching home once more was very great, but the new ties naturally absorbed a good deal of her time, and we saw much less of her than we could have wished. Her only daughter, Florence Marjory Edwards, was born in her mother's old home, February, 1890, and was a lifelong joy to her. She was dedicated (like all the members of the family) to God, the service being conducted in the house by the Rev. E. Medley.

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When they returned to China it was felt that it was desirable, one might almost say necessary, to take out an English nurse for the children, and they had the good fortune to secure an old family friend, the nurse who had been with us for seventeen years, and who had nursed my father to the end. Mrs. Henderson was by this time a widow, and her youngest son went out with them, and became a happy playmate of the children, being about the same age as George.

Soon after their arrival at Taiyuanfu, Dr. Edwards felt that with his growing family it was of great importance to have a more suitable house than could then be obtained, and he set to work to build one of a semi-European kind, while retaining as far as possible a Chinese style in the exterior.

The building of the house interested the Chinese greatly, and it required no small amount of time, patience and skill on the part of the architect, Dr. Edwards, to ensure its being built well and securely by builders who had no knowledge of such things as how to make windows that were glazed and would open and shut. All the native houses at that date had paper windows, which melted away like snow in thaw if the wind happened to blow the rain on them. Deep eaves prevent the rain getting at them otherwise, but it is most provoking when every one wants the window-paper hanger at the same moment. Some of the lattice work of the Chinese window frames is of real beauty, and coloured squares of paper are used with a good decorative effect. The new house was really a great success, especially on account of a nice, bright, airy schoolroom

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and nursery. I had a charming bedroom upstairs, looking over the roof-tops and trees to the eastern hills bounding the plain. The staircase was a great attraction to the Chinese, and I shall never forget the amusement of watching the women, who dared not walk down the steep stairs with their tiny feet, but sat down at the top and bumped from step to step all the way down ! The house was a wonderful contrast to the native ones, and helped to emphasise the atmosphere of brightness and light of a Christian home. One great advantage for the children was having boarded floors ; in native houses they are generally made of brick, and always seem to be damp and dirty ; as George remarked to me, “ they *do* hurt when you fall down.”

Her loving and compassionate heart made room for all the nondescripts in her household, but whether it made for good service is another matter ; here is her description in a letter home dated :

“ 21st November, 1892.

“ This month we have begun giving the servants their food and less wages, and have hired a cook to do for them all—eight. Does this sound rather a large staff to you ? Three boys and a woman do the household work, including the P.’s’ and our washing ; then there is the gate-keeper, H.’s assistant, another man who looks after the in-patients’ court, two odd men (taken on partly out of charity, as one is nearly blind and the other with a large family is stupid and without much strength in one arm), who clean chapel, dispensary and waiting-rooms, besides odd jobs. The cowman feeds the cow and the donkey and draws water, and will drive the cart when we get a mule. There are two blind boys, one of whom plays the organ in the chapel, and teaches reading and writing to the other, who,

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besides learning, shakes our cream in a bottle into butter, plucks fowls, and on washing days cleans the knives. Besides these I must not forget to enumerate that very important personage, the watchman, who all night is supposed to perambulate the premises, drumming with a tin can on a stick to scare thieves and other ill-disposed individuals who may be prowling round."

I went to China for a year in the autumn of 1893, to act as nursery governess to the children while the family at home was looking for some one suitable to undertake the post: the one they had at that time having suddenly decided she wished to be a missionary, for which she was undoubtedly better suited. As the children were aged three, five and six, we did kindergarten, and spent our time mostly in trying to acquire good habits that involved no brain exertion. The climate is so terribly over-stimulating to the nerves that children ought certainly to be kept back from learning while they are little; my main duty was to keep them from being in the care of some ignorant Chinese woman who would teach them undesirable things and expose them to risk of infection. This was probably the cause of little Henry's death from smallpox: his nurse admitted as much.

There was by this time another member of the family, a delightful baby, John, who was the joy of the household. I shared this care of the children with our faithful Hattie, whose chief charge was John, and in my leisure time painted all and sundry of the Chinese about the place, and studied their customs as well as those of the missionaries! Naturally I fell under the spell of that wonderful land, where all

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who spend some years are subtly changed, and not a few acquire even a Chinese look as well as manner. The dullest foreigners have their wits sharpened.

The winter passed rapidly away, for every one was kept busy, and the ceaseless succession of missionaries passing through, or needing nursing, absorbed all the spare time. Florence was always "given to hospitality," and her radiant presence was like sunshine at the feast. It was fortunately not so difficult or expensive a matter as it would be nowadays. I find in my diary the cost of one day's marketing—four shillings and fourpence; for this sum we bought 4 pheasants, 4 partridges, 100 walnuts, 1½ lbs. of chestnuts, 5 large sweet potatoes, 1 lb. of spinach, 1 cabbage, 2 large white fish, 1 other fish, beside paying the hire of the cart. At Christmas we had great festivities, and quite a series of entertainments at the various mission houses, both for Europeans and Chinese. There were some fourteen English children, whom I used to have in a Sunday School class, and naturally there was much intercourse in the small English community.

Many of these happy youngsters were to share their parents' terrible death by the sword a few years later, though the Boxer ruffians at first refused their hideous task when it came to the children's turn, and had to be threatened by the governor of the province, a man of exceptional ferocity. I find it difficult to listen patiently to those people who run down missionaries as seekers of soft jobs, when I think of sunny little Ruthie and Guy Farthing and their gentle mother and father, who returned to Taiyuanfu shortly

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before the Boxer outbreak ; for Mrs. Farthing, like my sister Jessie and her husband and son, had a strong presentiment of coming woe. They were all put to death on July 9th, 1900.*

In February, 1894, I was left in charge of the children while Florence went down to the coast to fetch up a cousin, Ellen Brown, who had come out to work with the Pigotts at Shouyang. The doctor was also away on medical work in another part of the province. Florence was always ready to undertake any job to help others, despite her deafness, which had by this time become much worse. She set off with her Chinese woman only in attendance, and it took them a fortnight to accomplish the journey to the coast. During her absence we were left under the guardianship of other missionaries, and I must say how much we owed to the kindness of one and all ; we lacked for nothing.

We had a nasty experience one day when I had taken the boys out to fly their kites on a piece of waste ground near the hospital, escorted by a missionary and our cook. Within the city walls there was quite a large amount of land where game was to be found, and it was not unusual to see men with their hawks out hunting. February is the month especially devoted in China to kite-flying, and it is considered a sport suitable to people of any age. There were Chinese gentlemen flying their kites, some of which were wonderful in construction ; there were centipedes thirty feet long, as effective as they were simple in

* See " Fire and Sword in Shansi," by Dr. Edwards. Ch. I.

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design, fish with revolving eyes, orchestras composed of quite a number of instruments in one big case, played by the wind as they soared through the air, messenger kites darting up the strings to those already aloft—in fact, a variety of most ingenious and attractive kites. We were thoroughly enjoying the show when suddenly it became obvious that our presence was displeasing to a party of fliers. They manœuvred their kites, until despite our efforts to free ourselves from entanglement, they succeeded in cross-flying us, and with a much stronger cord, cutting our kite loose. Our missionary became very indignant, and expostulated with them for their unkindness to the children, who were much upset by the loss of their plaything, but this became the signal for the gentleman's attendants to attack our cook. They fell upon him violently, scratched his face, stole his new cap, knocked him down and finally began pommelling his head with a stone. Mr. I. rushed to the rescue, and being a tall, brawny Scandinavian, succeeded eventually in dragging the cook out of the fray. Meanwhile I beat a hasty retreat with the terrified children, and we were thankful to reach our own gate without further molestation.

Incidents such as these seem small and trivial enough, but they indicated a deep-rooted smouldering aversion which might at any time burst out into flame. At certain times of unrest the doctor was warned by the official to be ready at any moment to flee to the Yamen (his residence) for protection; in such circumstances the children were put to bed several nights ready dressed for flight. Sometimes,

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as we walked in the city, the people showed their disgust by ostentatiously holding up a hand between their noses and ourselves, and on several occasions I experienced considerable alarm in that first year in China ; the atmosphere had extraordinarily changed before my second visit in 1907.

During the summer I saw nothing of Florence, for I took the boys to Shouyang in May, for a month's visit to my other sister, and spent nearly half of it in bed with an acute attack of rheumatism ; the climate there brings out all your weaknesses. In the native house we occupied, I used to watch from bed the rats scuttling about the paper ceiling, and stopping at a certain hole to peep down at me with their fierce little eyes ! They are a real danger in the inns, as they attack people in their sleep, especially children. But rats are not the only dangerous creatures there ; we often came across people with terribly scarred faces who had been bitten by wolves, and when we went for rambles through the not unattractive country, we always had to be armed against them, as they were apt to hide in the crops, and would quickly attack a child. Babies are often carried off by them from the villages, even stolen out of the houses.

On our return journey to Taiyuanfu we were met by a messenger saying that Florence was ill with scarlet fever, and that I should be taken in, with the children, by Mr. and Mrs. Goodall, of the China Inland Mission, who were goodness personified to us. Florence was very ill during those burning June and July days, but she was devotedly nursed by Hattie. Fervent were the prayers of the Chinese during

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that anxious time, and it was then that I first realised how much their sympathy meant to me, sympathy shown in such unobstrusive but unmistakable fashion. Florence had a strong love of life, and although for the second time in China she had been to the very gates of death, she was spared once more and made a complete recovery. She and Dr. Edwards both had a severe attack of typhus in 1887, and he was actually at one moment thought to be dead ; that such was not the case was due to the devotion of their nurses, and in answer to many prayers.

For seven weeks I stayed with the children at the Goodalls, and experienced a Shansi summer ; the heat was great ; how much over 100° in the shade we could not determine, as the thermometers registered no higher, but many nights we had terrific thunderstorms and in half an hour the courtyard would be a foot deep in water. Little John suffered greatly from mosquitoes and prickly heat, and he rarely got two hours' sleep at a time, but his temper was truly angelic, and he was so sweet and loving that it made up for everything ; as Cousin Ellen said, she was often struck when he was sitting at table by the almost saintly look on his lovely face, though he was full of buoyant spirits and looked so strong and well. This was more than a year later, but it was true of him during the whole of his short earthly life, and every one fell under the spell of his happy nature.

After this time of great anxiety and fatigue I was much disappointed to find that the head of the Mission was coming up with a large party to hold a conference as soon

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as ever our house was disinfected, and we consequently had to stay where we were, and also have missionaries billeted on our hosts, who were sorely put to it to provide further accommodation, our party of five occupying one courtyard. We were in no mood to appreciate the type of piety devoid of humour which predominated on that occasion, and the postponed departure of the people from day to day was an added aggravation and trial. With a sigh of relief we at last said good-bye to them. "Are you glad, Miss Emily," queried a candid youngster, "that the good people are gone? I am, for they were not as nice as I expected."

The C.I.M. was suffering acutely at that time from a clash of interests—the just claims of the *missionaries* and what was supposed to be the claims of the *work*. Drastic changes had been made in the administration, bearing harshly on many of the missionaries, especially those in the far interior. No business concerns are harsher than have been certain religious societies in their behaviour to their agents, and the churches are bound to keep strict watch upon them, and not to leave the control in the hands of any one or two individuals, no matter how reliable they may seem to be. New regulations—mainly financial, with regard to the holding of property, which the C.I.M. claimed as its own even when it had been bought with private funds—were imposed upon all their missionaries, and it was in consequence of this and other things that both the Pigotts, the Edwards' and others, were subsequently obliged to leave the Mission. They formed a little Society

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of their own to carry on the work at Shouyang and Taiyuanfu, and the C.I.M. withdrew all its workers from the latter place in 1896, except Miss Whittaker, an excellent nurse, who refused to leave, saying she had come out to work with Dr. Edwards and should continue to do so.

All this was a source of great grief to both the Pigotts and Edwards', who tried very hard to get reform, and failed; but since then the administration of the C.I.M. has, I understand, undergone great modifications for the better, and is run on sounder lines. Its aims are idealistic and appeal to all right-minded people, but it is just possible that the unity of work among differing sections of the church which characterises the C.I.M. may equally be attained in other ways, such as union colleges and schools, Y.M.C.A., etc., and in China we look forward to the time when the Chinese Christians will have worked out experimentally the problem of what form the church will take, suitable to the national character and needs. Speaking as a Baptist, I can say that all our best workers with whom I have discussed the subject hold this opinion, and have worked with this object in view.

China was engaged, in 1894, in a war with Japan, and it was considered wisest for me to leave Taiyuanfu earlier in the autumn than I intended. A governess for the children was on her way out, so that my special object of tiding over the interregnum had been achieved. Florence and I had only eleven days together before I left.

Looking back to those days and the work done by Florence, I feel most impressed by its intensive quality,

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and the sweet love she felt towards each individual case ; with her it was not a " case " but a human soul, with infinite possibilities, for whom no sacrifice was too great. The Chinese were always welcomed into her house and shown everything ; the Chinese schoolgirls—three of whom, as George expressed it, " have one wood leg and one skin leg "—due to ill-treatment—came regularly to play with our little ones on half-holidays, and to get a glimpse of English home life. Some people think that a life of asceticism makes the strongest appeal to Asiatics ; in India I think this is quite possible, but not in China. While useless luxury is most undesirable, a wholesome normal life commands the respect of the Chinese of all classes, and sets before them a Christian ideal in concrete form, not, of course, by any means a perfect one, but at least, a recognisable one. Its effect is noteworthy. Dr. Edwards was invited *with* his wife (in contrast to the universal Chinese custom), to dine with a Chinaman and *his* wife ; they were beginning the Christian custom of having meals together, and this was an inaugural ceremony—a true sacrament ! Think what it stood for—the raising of the wife to her husband's side ! And it is an undoubted fact that the improved position of women in China is primarily due to missionary effort.

In those days it was still considered desirable to have the chapel divided into two parts, separated by a curtain down the centre. We women entered by a different door, from a different street, and sat cross-legged on the *khang* (a raised and, in winter, heated platform), while the men

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had benches on the other side of the curtain. The preacher from the platform commanded a view of both sides. Never shall I forget the vivid impression caused by the doctor's sermon one Sunday morning (he is a most admirable Chinese speaker) on the Rich Man's Feast. As he dwelt on the excellence of the entertainment there came, as if involuntarily, from one of the congregation a heartfelt "Liao-puh-teh" (good gracious !) eliciting an audible smile from the rest. The chapel, with all the other buildings, was completely razed to the ground in 1900, so that the very ground plan was untraceable.

But the chapel was not the most—possibly it was the *least*—important part of the Mission work. The Hospital was the all-powerful magnet to draw men to hear the truths of Christianity, and in that work Florence took an active share, together with a most capable and devoted nurse, Miss Whittaker. Not only in attending to the out-patients, but also in visiting them in their homes, she never neglected opportunities of telling her message. On June 17th, 1895, she writes to her "Friends at West Street Chapel" :—

" Many of the people seem much interested in the Gospel, but few as yet come to the point of actually deciding to follow Christ. Not a few laugh at their idols, yet are afraid to destroy them. Last week Maio-ta-sao, the Biblewoman and I went to see a woman and her mother-in-law who were in the hospital some time, and said they had quite determined to be Christians ; but they live at the other side of the city, too far off to attend regularly. I was disappointed to find their idols and ancestral tablets still up, with incense vases before them. They said they were afraid of some misfortune if they destroyed them,

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but they were willing to give them to their friends to worship. We explained why that would not do, so then they said that we could take them down if we liked ; but I said it was for them to do, and it would be best for them to wait till they trusted the true God fully. They seemed glad when we offered to come regularly and teach them and the neighbouring women who had crowded in.

“ One great disappointment we had lately. The little slave girl of five, who had been so cruelly treated and was in the hospital two months for her eyes, was taken back to the lady to whom she belonged. We had quite hoped the mistress would have allowed us to keep her, because, when all had been done that could be, she has still not enough sight to see her way, and so could never be any use as a servant. Miao and I went to the lady's house and offered to pay what she had spent on the woman who looked after her at the hospital, but it was all in vain ; the lady seemed rather out of temper, and whether it was to thwart us, or why, I can't tell ; she said she was so fond of her she would not part with her for less than 50,000 cash (about £6), though the child only cost 8,000 (less than £1) when she could see. The poor little mite, scarcely as big as our Baby John, nestled in my arms, and you can imagine how sad I was to put her down and come away. One cheering thing is that the woman who looks after the child has broken off opium, and is, we believe, converted, through staying in the hospital.

“ A sad thing happened last week ; a woman came into the hospital with dropsy. She and her husband had lived with Dr. Schofield's landlord, on the same compound with Dr. and Mrs. S., before I came to China, and frequently attended worship, but, alas ! did not believe, and subsequently left the city. They seemed to have forgotten everything almost that they had heard. I had a talk with them and so had Mrs. L. in the afternoon, but we counted on having them in for some time, and that the woman would be less suffering and more fit to listen in a few days. The next morning Dr. E. tapped her, and she was greatly relieved and slept nearly all day ; then,

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in the evening, just after the doctor had seen her, she passed suddenly away. Whether they let her sit up, or did anything else unwise, we did not find out, but, as Mrs. L. said, had we known how short a time she would be with us, how much more diligent we should have been in trying to make her understand the Gospel! It is, indeed, a lesson to make the most of every opportunity. It is so sadly too easy to let the chance of winning a soul slip by!

“One encouraging case left the hospital a short time since, we believe converted. She came from near Ping-yao (two days’ journey from here), where Mr. S. is working, and he told us that they were particularly glad to hear of her resolve to be a Christian, for while most of the men of her family are Christians the women both of the family and of the village have hitherto been strongly opposed, or indifferent, to the Gospel, and they hope this will be the beginning of better days. The men who are Christians walk some five or six miles every Sunday to worship, bringing their food and walking back in the evening. One of them was converted by reading a translation of ‘Christy’s old Organ,’ which he bought at a fair. For years he had been longing for salvation, and when he read this book he said it told him just the very thing he had been looking for all those years. As far as my experience goes, it is a most unusual thing for a heathen to be longing for salvation. The other day I asked Miao-ta-sao, the Mongol Christian, if she had ever wished for the forgiveness of her sins before she heard of Christ. ‘Oh, dear, no! She had no idea she had any sins to be forgiven!’ and she did not think other heathen had such desires. I told her I thought the vegetarians and those who recite long prayers, etc., and tried to do good deeds, surely had, and she admitted there might be a few. Miss Shackleton spent a few days in a village near here last Easter, and told us there were two or three women there who seemed to have been dimly groping after light. One of them called Cheng had for years refused to join her husband and children in idolatrous practices, so Miss S. and Yen-ta-sao, an inquirer who accompanied her, went to the

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woman's house, but were disappointed to get anything but a welcome. However, they sat down in the court and tried to talk, while Mrs. Cheng sewed away at a garment she was making without looking up or speaking to them. Presently Miss S. said that God could change even a bad temper ; then, for the first time, she looked up, apparently thinking that here at last was something practical. She drew her little straw mat closer to the guests, dropped her needlework and said : ' You say God can change our tempers if we pray to Him ; how, then, do you pray ? ' Her husband then assured her that her temper truly was very bad, and the group round began to chaff her for wanting to hear the foreign doctrine ; but the woman was really in earnest, and listened intently while Yen-ta-sao told her very simply how God had heard her prayers and how, when people made her angry, she just prayed where she was, and then God made her heart peaceful, and the anger stopped in her throat, and did not make her lips speak angry words. Yen-ta-sao, far from having any pretension to eloquence, always stammers and stutters, Miss S. says, and turns red, but her words this time were from her heart, and seemed to reach the people's hearts, for they became almost reverent, and Mrs. Cheng begged Miss S. to teach her a prayer, which she did ; but the one bit she really seemed to remember was ' Pray God change my temper and forgive my sins.' Miss S. has heard since that she tries to pray daily."

Beside the medical work, Florence was particularly keen as to the school for girls, and very anxious to make it a training-ground for future teachers, but the class from which the girls came was not very suitable, as many of them were rescued from piteous circumstances. It was never found possible to have the High School for girls of the upper class, which we hoped to establish, so Florence sent a few selected girls to the American Board School at Peking for higher training under Miss Miner's admirable care.

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Among these was Han Yü-Mei, the daughter of a confirmed opium-smoker, who had sold several daughters to the highest bidder, regardless of the character of the buyers. With the help of the mother—who was a Christian—they were able to save Yü-Mei from his clutches. At the school in Peking she quickly gained distinction, became the head scholar, and was eventually taken on to the staff as a teacher. Her teachers testified to the fact that her influence was felt by all the scholars—not only from the educational, but also from the moral and spiritual point of view. She remained there until her marriage in 1909, when she returned to her own province, and was a great help to her husband, who had been educated in America both at Oberlin and Yale, and was then principal of a school for boys at Taiku in connection with the American Board Mission. Her health had unfortunately been somewhat undermined by the privations endured during the siege of the Legation during the Boxer rising in 1900, and she died a few years later.

Her brother—Han Chao Kwei—had been trained in the house and taught English by Mrs. Henderson chiefly, then trained by Dr. Edwards as Hospital Assistant, and subsequently taken to England by Mr. and Mrs. Pigott to see if he could have a medical course; but, owing to the long training which he would have required to pass any preliminary examination, it was decided that it would be better for him to study at Peking. He was at the Medical College there when the Boxer troubles broke out, and with many other Chinese Christians took refuge at the British

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Legation. During the siege he helped to attend to the Chinese wounded, and after the relief was appointed as interpreter to the British Forces, and was attached to Captain (now General) Barrow. He acquitted himself so well in both capacities that he was recommended by this officer for a decoration by the Chinese Government.

He had made himself so useful to some of the Chinese gentry before, during, and after the siege that they helped to set him up in practice, and he has had a most successful career as a doctor. Hearing that Dr. and Mrs. Edwards were returning to China in 1903, he invited them to be his guests, and they found that he had furnished a nice large bedroom as far as possible in European style expressly for their use. Although he had several servants and was dressed no longer in cotton but in silken robes, he himself prepared dishes and waited upon them. The same thing happened in 1907, when my friend and I were his guests, and never have I had kinder and more considerate hosts than him and his wife. He certainly is an example of a Chinese who has practically shown his gratitude for kindness received.

On the outbreak of the Boxers, his sister and many other Christian Chinese, who could not be accommodated in the British Legation, were put under the care of the Allied Forces in Peking in a very large palace which had belonged to one of the Manchu princes and which was not far from the Legation. Naturally one of his first thoughts was the safety of his sister, and he asked permission to take her under his care. The ladies who were still responsible for

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the girls objected, on the score of his being unmarried, for, according to Chinese custom, it would not have been at all the correct thing. But it so happened that the Christian girl to whom he was engaged was also among the refugees with her mother, and with her consent he was forthwith married and was then able to have his sister to live with them. From that time onwards his home was hers until she left to be married in distant Shansi.

To return to the work at Taiyuanfu, the next few years were very busy ones of mingled joy and sorrow. The death of little John from acute laryngitis was a sore trial. Florence wrote to her mother about him—

“ April 16th, 1896.

“ Our sweet little boy! It seemed impossible when so few days before he was so full of life and activity, such a bright, frolicsome little being, always on the alert to do any little thing for his father or me. If I told one of the others to shut the door, he would fly to do it, or to get my trumpet, or Bible, or anything I asked for, and when by chance one of the others happened to be before him, he would be so disappointed, but they generally gave place to him in these things. . . . All our memories of him are sweet, and I feel specially thankful to have that one word ‘ I love Him,’ which you may remember he said when he saw the picture of our Lord on the Cross. He spoke with such deep feeling, and after that he was nearly always very glad to come and pray every night and morning, and when he had finished repeating the words after me, he often used to say with great satisfaction, ‘ I said it too.’ He used to repeat the Young Helpers’ Prayer with the others—‘ Our Father in Heaven, bless, we pray Thee, all the poor little children throughout the world, and fill our hearts with loving desires to help them.’ . . . Going to the out-patients the day Miss W. was away made me

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feel more strongly than ever how unspeakable our joy and blessing is even in the midst of grief. And, oh ! how light our sorrows compared with those of the people around us—not to speak of Armenia ! The Chinese seem very much struck with our darling's peaceful, happy expression."

Shortly after this the family and the governess went to visit various American friends at Liman, Rentsun, Taiku, etc., and I put together extracts from various of Florence's letters describing the journey.

" May 4th-18th, 1896.

" We have changed our quarters, coming about ten miles south to the foot of the hills, which form the south-east boundary of the Taiyuan plain. On Thursday we breakfasted at six-thirty, but didn't get off before eight. It was a perfect morning, bright sunshine, but quite fresh after the rain. H. bought Mr. L.'s grey pony, and Jessie and Tom kindly lent me their brown, so we were able to ride and enjoyed it exceedingly, Nellie and the children going in the cart. The young green of the wheat and the elms and willows just bursting into leaf, and the pink peach blossom and white cherry and pear in full bloom, were most lovely. Everything spoke of resurrection. I saw quite a large patch of violets under a bank. We reached here pretty well tired out at dusk.

" Little Willie Davies thoroughly enjoys the society of the other children, and they enjoy his no less. G. says it is because he reminds him of John. H. and I can't look at him without thinking of John, but though the tears will come sometimes, it is all a sweet memory, and the gladness of hope even now far outweighs the present disappointment and heartache. Certainly a sorrow like this helps one very much to set one's hope more perfectly on the manifold grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. We have been reading again some of the verses that were given us when little

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Henry was taken Home, and one that Horbury gave me on the first anniversary of dear father's Home-going :

“ ‘ And since I prayed for him that God would bless
With better gifts than I could ask or know,
And said ‘ Thy will be done,’ shall I rebel
Since in His wisdom He has answered so.’

“ Willie is a fortnight older than John and rather taller ; John was just forty inches high.

“ The day before leaving Rentsun, the D.'s took us to see a private house and garden at the other end of the village. It astonished us to see the many fine buildings in this neighbourhood, some most beautifully and richly decorated, with an amount of gilding which must have cost no small sum. I have seen no houses in Taiyuanfu itself at all to compare with them, and we have passed whole villages composed of them.

“ Dr. Hall sent Mrs. Hall's chair and bearers to Rentsun, and they arrived there about 6 a.m. on Thursday, having started at 3. We set off at 9, Nellie and Marjory in the chair, George in the cart, and H. and I on the ponies ; it was a beautiful fresh morning, and we enjoyed the journey very much. They do so enjoy everything ; it is quite refreshing. ‘ Oh ! mother, what a *beautiful* house,’ when we arrived at R. and a tub for a bath ! ‘ Oh ! we never had that before.’ ‘ And, oh ! Mother, the water's soft, not a bit like what we have at Taiyuanfu.’ It is just like rain water, but I didn't expect G. to notice it as soon as he put his hands in. He found one great curiosity that he didn't remember ever to have seen before—an earth worm. Here they find all sorts of treasures in the shape of flowers, snails with their horns sticking out, scorpions, lizards (one in the bath), and actually just now ‘ a baby worm with its mother ’ ! This is such a delightful garden, with firs of several kinds, low-spreading cedars, lilacs, and such a magnificent yellow briar rose-bush—ten feet high, I should say. The children gathered a lapful of fragrant blossoms this morning for me to make Nellie (the governess) a birthday wreath,

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and you would never have known they had picked one. The premises are very large, and they pay less than thirty taels a year for the whole. If it were in the city we should have to pay more than that a month, I expect. But the owner is an opium-smoker—does nothing but smoke, they say, turning night into day and day into night, and taking an ounce a day of opium, for which he is pawning all he possesses. It is the same with others in the village. Across the street they have been cutting down cedars for kindling! It is too sad to see whole villages going to ruin with opium when they were once so prosperous. This is such a pleasant country place, and the fresh, bracing air, fragrant with the breath of pine trees and roses, is quite reviving; it reminds me of Switzerland.

“ This morning we all went with cart and ponies to a village two miles off to see some peonies, of which Dr. Hall had heard as being the finest. They were certainly magnificent. The largest bush may have been four feet high and perhaps five feet in diameter, and was covered with beautiful blooms, some deep crimson and others palest blush. The people take the greatest care of them; there was a large awning over the two largest plants to protect them from the sun and rain. They were in temple courts. There were two magnificent single peonies in the inner court of the Rentsun temple. Mr. Davies persuaded them to unlock it for us to see them and the pond of goldfish, which G. had been begging every day to be allowed to visit. The peonies were taller than I am, and about eight feet in diameter, and covered with crimson blossom. They say they water them with pork broth.”

After returning to Taiyuanfu she was anxious about Marjory, who was ill in bed with sore throat and fever; indeed, there was hardly ever a time when there was not sickness in the house, and heavy has been the toll paid in most of the mission houses there.

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"Many people," she says in a letter, "have expressed surprise that in such a fine healthy climate as Taiyuanfu there should be much sickness, and especially fever, and one friend suggests that it may be owing to our houses being floored with brick, not of very superior description. For my own part, I can't see how any one who has ever taken a walk through the city need be surprised if half the people died of fever. You walk sometimes over your shoetops in fine, black dust, the pulverised filth of centuries, which has accumulated so that in some streets the houses are a foot or so below the level of the road. The authorities are doing something now, in their usual inefficient way, to remedy this evil."

The dust to which she refers is probably to a great extent the cause of the large death-rate, and also of the nerve irritation. On complaining to Florence that I always woke up in a state of irritability with somebody, she admitted to feeling the same—sometimes almost unbearably—but no one would have guessed it in her case, so perfect was her self-control. A hot-headed Irishman, whose temper got the better of him almost every hour of the day, said to me ruefully, "At home I always counted for a good-tempered fellow, but I am afraid my friends would hardly recognise me if they saw me out here." It certainly ought to be taken into account, when judging of the shortcomings of missionaries, that climate is responsible for a great deal of friction in cases like these.

All sorts of work claimed her time and thought, and to each she gave the most careful and painstaking attention, as will be gathered from the following three extracts from letters :

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" May, 1898.

" I have been spending a good deal of time to-day, and other days too, listening to love affairs. U-hsiang, the postman's widow, and Ten-chiao-zu (H.'s assistant) are thinking of getting married, but they have been nearly three months making up their minds, there being several pros and cons. This morning I had a talk with the girl, and this afternoon with her go-between, Ma-ta-Sao, and H. has been talking with the man, who finally says he is ' exceedingly wishful ' to be engaged to U-hsiang. H. wonders whether he ought not to try and find a wife for his other assistant, Neo-hsiao, as J. and T. are looking out for one for their boy Den-Ren. (He was killed by the Boxers in 1900.) "

" It is a great relief to have got it (the account of the work at Taiyuanfu, written at Hudson Taylor's request) finished, as I found it very difficult to make it fulfil the requirements of being accurate, short, interesting and profitable, and now I feel I have not done justice to the workers, but I know that those who are alive won't want to see panegyrics of themselves, much less those who are in heaven."

(It is to be regretted that this report appears not to have been published.)

" This has been a red-letter day, for H. baptized eight this morning. The mason's brother and his wife, such a nice, bright Christian woman. We advised her to wait a few months on the score of health, but no, she was strong on being baptized at once with her husband, and he said that he thought that in obeying God's command they could trust to be preserved from harm. The others were Las-Chang (a Hsin-Cheo convert), Tsai-chai, who painted most of the house, Yin-keo, our cook San-nin, Neo-Hsiao's sister (see p. 102), Miao, the Mongol woman, and Wang, who was also one of Miss S.'s opium patients. There were a great number of people at the service, and in the

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second service those baptized gave their testimony. After that we had the Communion. Si-ku-niang does so want to be baptized, but her mother laughs at the idea of such a thing ; she has asked me to beg her mother's permission. I like, I should say *love*, the girl more and more. H. took another tumour off her ear ten days ago."

" August 23rd.

" I called on Mrs. Tong (Si-Ku-niang's mother) a few days before coming to Shouyang, and, after sipping tea together, she presently said how very pleased she was that her daughter's ears were now quite well, and her general health better than it had been for years past, and she hoped soon to make us some little acknowledgment. I lost no time in assuring her that we were very far from wishing for any return for the small services we had had the happiness of rendering. At the same time I gladly took the opportunity of representing to her that it was the duty and great privilege of all Christians to be baptized, and begged her most earnestly not to withhold her permission to her daughter's being baptized. She answered with all politeness, but very decidedly, that it was quite proper for common people to receive the rite of baptism, but it was out of the question for mandarins or their families to do so. I reminded her that since the Son of God came from Heaven and was baptized, saying, ' thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness,' it could not be out of place for the highest human being to follow His example. I told her that our Queen was a Christian, and on being asked the secret of England's greatness by the Ambassadors of an African king, presented them with a Bible and told them that it lay in that. I fear, however, that Lady Tong was not much impressed by this, as the Chinese think their own country so much superior to all others. I took the opportunity of telling her, as I have done before, how anxious we were that not only her daughter, but that she and the Mandarin and all their family should be saved, the more so because of their kindness and consideration to us

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for many years. We could not bear to think of their cutting themselves off from eternal life. The next day the daughter came to chapel, and told me her parents were as decided as ever against the baptism, and, she feared, would never give their consent, so could she not be baptized? I told her she certainly could, but as we were just going away, we would pray about it for a month or two first."

This chapter has lengthened out, and I must bring it to a close. The family proposed going home on furlough in 1898, but various things prevented this. In the summer of this year, the youngest son was born, and I feel that it will be best to try and give a little sketch of his life as a whole in a chapter by itself.

CHAPTER SIX

ROBERT

“ Because of you we will be glad and gay,
Remembering you we will be brave and strong ;
And hail the advent of each dangerous day,
And meet the great adventure with a song.
And as you proudly gave your jewelled gift,
Will give our lesser offering with a smile,
Nor falter on the path where all too swift
You led the way and leapt the golden stile.”

ROBERT AMOR EDWARDS was born at Taiyuanfu, and Florence's Benjamin was a boy that would have been dear to any mother's heart—a most lovable, sunny creature, who in his short life won much affection, and, like his mother, radiated happiness on all with whom he came in contact. Not exceptionally gifted in any way, he had a healthy love of fun, a delight in all the beauty of nature and the pleasant things of life. Being considerably younger than George and Marjory, his early days were largely spent amongst grown-up people, but he thoroughly enjoyed being with other children, delighted in children's parties, and adored babies ! His ideal world was one populated with “ babies and squirrels and myself.” He had a young cousin just the same age as himself, who was a constant visitor at his grandmother's house when he was living with

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her, and they were good playmates. One day when they were together, she began singing lustily, "There is a happy land, far, far away." "*Not* far away," interjected Robert firmly. "*Far, far* away," sang the maiden. "*Not* far away," still more emphatically from Robert. "Mother says Heaven's *not* far away—so it isn't." The diplomatic maiden continued the song without words, so harmony reigned once more, and doubtless as she hummed the air through closely pursed lips, she repeated to herself, "Far, far away."

Robert came to England with his parents in 1899, and when they returned to China in the spring of 1904, they left him at Bordighera with his grandmother and aunts. From that time his Aunt Lydia became a second mother to him, and she really loved and watched over him as if he were her own child. Needless to say, the love was fully returned, and Robert always looked on her as the one to whom to turn in every emergency. His religious training was considered of primary importance, and, in his mother's absence, she undertook that by no means easy task. Like most children, he had a knack of putting difficult questions, of which the following is an amusing instance: "I know that all the good people when they die go to Heaven, and all the bad people when they die go to Hell, but what I want to know, Aunt Lydia, is *where* the people go who are partly good and partly bad, like you and me." He had the greatest admiration for Dr. Barnardo, and prayed constantly that he might be exactly like him when he grew up.

ROBERT

It was with the utmost reluctance that his parents came to the decision that it was best for him not to return with them to China, as things were still very unsettled there after the Boxer Rebellion. As they said good-bye to Rob in the train at Bordighera, the final parting was so hard that the train had started before they knew it, and Rob and his aunt were carried on to the next station. He loved his Bordighera home, to which we returned each winter for the last few years of my mother's life. The garden was the greatest joy to him, with its terraces above the sea, and he revelled in the flowers, proud to learn about them, and full of questions, such as "Are these annuals, or immannuals?" One spring, when I came back from a tour in India, I found my room a perfect bower. The bed was garlanded with creepers, and a beautiful design of flowers on the pillow and counterpane showed his artistic taste; he was only six at the time. I arrived in the middle of the night, but, hearing voices, he woke up and inquired how I liked my bower.

The letters written to him by his mother were eagerly read and re-read. Here are two to show what they were like:

"November 6th, 1903.

"DARLING ROBERT,

"As you are so fond of them, I think you would have enjoyed being at our lunch to-day, for there were seven men at it, and only mother of womankind! We had to have it at 12 o'clock, so that the professors of the University might get to their classes at one.

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“ November 11th.

“ A great many days have passed since I began this letter, and I have now received three delightful letters each from you and Miss D., all arriving together, and so full of interesting news. Thank you both very much indeed for them, and you for the amusing picture you drew of the house with all the people looking out of the windows, and the cart and horse in front, and the gangway and the weather-cock. I shall keep that. Peter (one of the Boxer-time orphans) begged me when he came home from school and found me reading my letters, to give him one of yours, so I let him have the one about the bicycle, to his great delight. . . .

“ Last Monday I thought I would go and see a poor old blind woman I heard of, who lives across the river about six miles off, so after attending to the eyes of the other woman I told you of (oh no ! she didn't come that morning, but waited till the evening, that she might go to bed as soon as her eyes were done, and forget their soreness in sleep !).—Well, I set three women to sew winter clothes for your father and me and the blind men, and then mounted Brownie and set off. On reaching the river, I got off to cross the bridge, which Brownie didn't at all like doing, as the poles it was made of rolled about so. At the village of Li I found Mrs. Yen, the washerwoman, who had come to look after her sick son and son-in-law, and asked her if she would take me to the blind woman's village. She was rather afraid of riding Brownie, and said she would walk, but that, I said, would never do, as her little bound feet would take far too long in walking, so she got on and looked a very funny figure, holding on to the pommel with one hand and the back of the saddle with the other. The village of Siao Cu was not much more than a mile away, so we soon arrived, and had a crowd of people, sick and well, with bad eyes and good eyes, in the old woman's room. Some of them, poor things ! had a good deal to say about their troubles, but I won't repeat it to you. The old woman had cataract, and might have been cured, but she was over eighty, and I

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couldn't advise her to try an operation, nor did she wish to. We visited several people in Li (Lee), and I had a nice little dinner of boiled dough-strings and cabbage and eggs at Mrs. Li's. When we got back to the river, Mr. Brownie absolutely refused to go over ; he had had more than enough of those shaky poles, and nothing could induce or force him to venture on them again. The men at the bridge and two or three passers-by were very kind in trying to help, but all in vain, so after about half an hour I told the soldier* he had better quickly mount and ride round by a good bridge, which they told us of some distance higher up, while I walked home. He didn't want to leave me, but I said he must, or we should find the city gates closed. (They are always shut at sundown, sometimes earlier, and after that no one is allowed to enter till the following day.) I knew there was time for me to walk, but we didn't know how far off the other bridge was, as one man said one thing and one another,† and it would not have been safe for me to ride fast, as the pony is given to stumbling, and might have fallen. It was a pleasant afternoon for walking, and several of the villagers whom I met with their barrows or bundles accosted me with a friendly word. The soldier got home first, and set out again in search of me, for soon after I got into the city a man whose wife I knew (they used to live at Shouyang and often see Uncle Tom and Aunt Jessie) begged me to go and see his little girl's sore foot, and he would send me home in a cart. I had just been asking God to let me find a cart if He pleased, as I was rather tired, so I felt sure He had sent the man, and went with him to his home. The little girl, a bonny, fat little thing, is just your age, and has a most dreadful sore on her foot, through having it bound. The flesh is nearly gone off more than half the top of her foot, and the little toe

* Military protection was provided by the authorities at this time, and the men chosen were usually very decent fellows.

† Distance in China is always uncertain, "The time for a cigarette," for instance.

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is quite black, and, your father thinks, will come off. She has been coming every day for me to dress it, and is so good and has only cried a little once. Her mother says she won't bind it again when it gets well. To-day I bound the well foot, and put cotton wool between the poor pinched-up little toes. She is not coming again for three days.

"Good-night, my dear, dear boy. Fondest love from your father and ever loving mother,

"S. F. EDWARDS."

"Taiyuanfu,

"April 8th, 1904.

"MY OWN DEAR ROBERT,

"I was delighted to get another letter from you, and that nice message in Miss D.'s letter. Many thanks to you both. Aunt Lydia had just arrived when you wrote, and she tells me what a big boy you are growing. You ask how we are getting on in China. Very well, only we miss our dear George and Marjory and Robert more than I know how to write. I am so glad that you like the little skin, but, sad to say, I can't tell you the name of it. What a sweet little p.c. you sent me.

"Some of the Chinese are really learning to love the Lord. Aurora's father was telling me about her to-day. He teaches her and reads the Bible and prays with her every day, but her mother can't bear it, and sometimes even snatches the Bible away and throws it on the ground. Aurora's father said, 'It is a very mysterious thing, but Aurora always obeys me in religion, and disobeys her mother, whereas in other things she obeys her mother and disobeys me.' For instance, her mother tells her not to pray, and she will, and when she was taking her medicine for sore throat (diphtheria) she asked God's blessing on it, and when her mother laughed at her, and said it was nonsense, and she mustn't, she replied it might be difficult to take, so she had better ask God to bless it. 'But,' he continued, 'when I gave her ten cash like this,' pulling them out of his pocket and counting them on the table, 'and told her to divide

them with her mother, half and half, she first gave her mother six and took four, and then gave all to the mother, because she wanted them.' For five days before the New Year this dear little girl would not eat any of the sweet white toffee her mother gave her, and which she was very fond of, because her father said she mustn't, as it had been offered to idols. The people smear the kitchen-god's mouth with it to make his lips stick together and prevent his telling God any of their bad words and deeds, which he is supposed to report in Heaven, when on the twenty-third day of the last month of the year his picture with that of his wife is taken down from the stove and burnt, which the people call sending him up to Heaven. Everybody eats the toffee, except Christians, who want to have nothing to do with idols.

"An American lady is staying with us because she is ill and soon going to Chefoo. She was so interested in seeing the humming birds which dear Grandmamma sent (for the Museum), because there are two or three kinds that fly about around her home in Central Park. Only one kind, however, is common so far north, and that is the ruby-throat. They sometimes fly into the house, and her sister caught one and held it very carefully between her hands for a few moments. It lay quite still, and when she looked at it she found the poor wee thing was dead—probably of fright. They often catch them and let them go again. I caught a sparrow in the sitting-room this morning, and gave it a kiss, which I am afraid it did not enjoy, but it greatly enjoyed flying away when I let it go."

When the parents returned to England in 1906, Florence felt she must devote herself specially to the children and their training, so a house was taken in Edinburgh, in order that they might live at home while attending school; the boys both attended Merchiston. How eager their mother was that they should have the best possible education, and how perturbed when she thought there was a lack of

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thoroughness in the way that certain subjects were taught ; what distress and concern at the choice of books in the school library. At breakfast she used to read aloud any matters of importance in the newspaper, so that they might take an interest in political events, and be well-informed as to public affairs. In a letter to a friend she says :— “ I do think with you that at sixteen, or even earlier, we should lead rather than command our children, and seek to make them *one with us* in everything we possibly can, discussing things and getting their opinion, and showing them that we value it. I suppose the more we confide in them, the more likely they are to confide in us.”

The children's friends were always welcomed to the house, and the young people encouraged to take part in every good work and generous cause. Missionary activity naturally centred in such a home, and the great International Congress of Missions in 1910 brought an ever-deepening sense of the world's needs and the solidarity of the human race. I was attending it as a delegate, and can never forget the great forward tide of emotion created by it in the cause of Christian unity, a tide which is sweeping yet further forward with resistless force in consequence of the Great War.

Every night Florence read the Bible to Rob when he was in bed, and they learnt verses by heart together ; nothing was allowed to interfere with this habit. Writing to him some years later, she says, “ One thing I find difficult to do without you, and that is to learn my Scripture and hymns *thoroughly* ! I am learning Psalm 1 in Chinese,

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and various isolated verses, and have just got (I *think* perfectly !) the glorious hymn—

“ ‘ Jesus lives ! No longer now
Can thy terrors, Death, appal me ;
Jesus lives ! By this I know
From the grave He will recall me.
Brighter scenes at death commence !
This shall be my confidence ! ’

“ London Mission, Peking,

“ December 7th, 1913.”

In due time the mother had her heart's desire, for Robert made the great decision to serve God with his whole heart ; he was baptized and joined the church at West Street, Rochdale, so completing the family record. He, like his brother and sister, saw in the mission field the goal of his aspirations, and if the Great War had not called him to so different a service, would probably have followed their example also in entering the medical profession.

At Merchiston he was a schoolboy with a clean record, not over keen on study, but entering with zest into the O.T.C. training, and justifiably proud of the corps. He made one or two friendships, to which he was thoroughly loyal, but he was essentially a home boy. Since his death the mother of one of his friends wrote to say what an immense admiration he had inspired in her son, although they only used to meet in the holidays, when Rob stayed at his aunts' house, Old Falinge, Rochdale. It was not only those of his own age who felt this, but old and young without exception held him in high regard ; his uncle said,

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“Every time I saw Rob I admired him more,” an admiration which was mutual, for in one of his last notes to me, Rob wrote, “Isn’t Uncle George splendid ? ”

During his school years, Robert had some happy times abroad with his family—eighteen months at Lausanne, tours in Norway and Germany, trips in England, Scotland, and Ireland, all of which he enjoyed with keen relish, endearing himself by his courteous and modest friendliness to people of different nationalities and classes. One charming incident occurred when I was just starting for war-work in France, the first autumn of the war ; he wrote me a note of good wishes, saying that he wanted to give me a remembrance, but, not knowing what I would like best, he sent half-a-crown with which to get what I really liked. The books on which the money was spent had a rare aroma quite irrespective of their intrinsic merit. He took real trouble at all times to give gifts that would please.

On leaving school at the age of eighteen he naturally obeyed the call to active service, and his mother entered with keenest sympathy into all the details of his training. She writes at this time to a friend about the decision for him to go to Sandhurst—

“ January 14th, 1915.

“ At this point (of the letter) Rob came in and opened a Civil Service letter which had just arrived ; it was to say he was to be at Sandhurst on the 18th ; he was 22nd on the list of 167 who passed . . . we had thought of letting him join the O.T.C., but my brother so strongly advised Sandhurst, as giving more thorough training, that we thought we ought to fall in with what he counselled. He said that R. was too young,

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and for many of these young officers who were sent out not properly trained it is practically sending them out to be murdered! We just commit R.—as you do your nephew—to God's keeping. It is a life of sore temptation, especially, I think, when not at the front."

He did very well at Sandhurst, being promoted to corporal soon after he entered, and then sergeant. He remarked on this—how strange it seemed to count for something, when he counted for nothing at school. He was eight months at Sandhurst. Again, by his uncle's advice, he applied for a commission in the West Yorkshire Regiment, and was gazetted. The next few months were spent at Whitley Bay with the troops in training, and he distinguished himself in musketry. Then came the order to go out to France. He started March 6th, 1917, and was in the fighting line almost at once. So much has been written by far abler pens than mine, and especially by such young true-hearted soldiers, of what this baptism of fire meant for them, that I shall not say anything about it. In a short seven weeks he came back wounded in the shoulder, and was in a beautiful hospital at Clifton for some weeks. He was still as gay and merry as ever, wonderfully little changed, as it seemed to us all, far more light-hearted than the French boys, scores of whom I have watched in hospitals, and who are endeared to me by four long years of service.

As soon as he was well again, Robert was given a post as instructor in musketry, and later on "secret" work, the nature of which was never divulged to us. On April 5th,

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1918, he returned to France ; at the very hour of starting his best-loved Aunt Lydia entered into rest. No less than he, she laid down her life for her country ; by her ceaseless and unremitting toil she had so weakened her vital forces that the weary heart could no longer endure the strain. So short a parting it was to be—so swift the reunion.

“ They are all gone into the world of light !
And I alone sit ling’ring here ;
Their very memory is fair and bright
And my sad thoughts doth cheer.

“ Dear, beauteous death ! the jewel of the just
Shining nowhere but in the dark ;
What mysteries do lie beyond the dust,
Could man outlook that mark ! ”

Robert’s attitude towards death is finely put in a letter which he wrote when at Sandhurst to our gardener and his wife on the death of their son, killed in France.

“ Royal Military College,
“ Camberley,
“ 10.5.1918.

“ DEAR MR. AND MRS. GOODWIN,

“ This morning I got the news of dear Donald’s death. You know, I am sure, how much I sympathise with you in your loss, although I cannot share all your grief. But I am so glad that you know where he is gone, and that you can therefore gain from above the only comfort that is worth having. I always think how lovely it will be when we die to meet our dear ones again, and never, *never* part from them, and we shall be there for ages without end, compared with which our life here is but for a moment. This is too joyous and wonderful for

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mere words, and so comforting, I think. I am sure if Donald could speak to you now he would say, ' Cheer up, father and mother, we'll soon be together again ! '

" Your very affectionate friend,

" ROBERT A. EDWARDS."

The last three months of Robert's earthly life were spent at the Front, and not long after he went to France, his father followed him there, taking an appointment as Lieutenant in the R.A.M.C. He was appointed to the Chinese Base Hospital at Noyelles, but they did not meet again, nor did he succeed in getting leave, as he had hoped, to visit me in Paris, where I was working in two big French military hospitals. He wrote cheery little notes to us all, but not telling much of his thoughts ; while always gay and frank on the surface, his nature was deeply reserved, and even to those he loved best that reserve was rarely departed from, and never entirely withdrawn.

At the beginning of July he gave his company officer a note of introduction to me, as he had a week on leave to spend in Paris, and Rob knew how anxious I should be to hear all about him. The " all " was very disquieting, for Captain Y. told me they were in a most dangerous salient. " I wouldn't tell you," he said, " if you were his father or sister, but I am sure we shall have a tremendous attack soon, and I only hope I may be back in time for it, as otherwise your nephew will be leading them in my place." I dined with him that evening, and we talked mostly about Rob. He told me with bewildered astonishment how he liked to have pictures on the walls of his dug-out, and

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when I declined a cocktail before the meal, the Captain said, "Why, that's like your nephew!" He offered to take any little parcel back to him, and I asked him to suggest anything he thought would be most acceptable, but beyond "pictures" for his dug-out, and a few prosaic necessities, we didn't get far. The parcel was taken, but never delivered, for the following Sunday, July 14th, Rob led his men into action and "foremost fighting fell." A few brief hours, mostly spent in unconsciousness, and his bright spirit passed painlessly into the land of light, to rejoin those he so dearly loved, his mother and his aunt Lydia. His father was told by telegraph that his son was mortally wounded, and at once set out by motor to see him, but only arrived some hours after his death. He was able once more to look on the loved face, and see how the boy had, in those few months since they had parted, changed into the man. Rob was laid to rest amongst his comrades—his last words were a message of cheer to them—on the following day in the little "God's Acre" at Lijssenthoek, near Poperinghe, and the father returned once more to his work at Noyelles.

The first to run forward to greet him on his return, and to ask for tidings, was one of the Chinese, by whom he is greatly beloved. He has carried on the work there with ever-deepening devotion; as his Commanding Officer wrote to me, "He is a tower of strength—an example to all of us." As regards Rob, there is but one testimony alike from officers and men. Captain Y. wrote to me of his death, "I never was so sorry about anything in my life."

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At the moment that he fell, his servant was beside him, and he was also wounded and carried to the same hospital. He asked later if he might not see Robert, but was informed that he was unconscious, and, unfortunately, Dr. Edwards was not told of his being there. Many months later he heard from a wounded comrade that Robert's sister was doctor in a Nottingham hospital, where he was under her care, and at once wrote to ask if she were still there, saying that Robert had been like a brother to him, and he wanted to tell her all he could about that last fight. Nothing could be a more sure tribute to what Robert was to his men. In his tunic pocket papers were found with the men's home addresses, so that he might be able to communicate with their families in case of need.

“He being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time; for his soul pleased the Lord; therefore he hastened to take him away.”—Wisdom iv. 13, 14.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DESTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION, 1900-1906

"Suffering is the fastest steed that will bear you to perfection."—
MEISTER ECKEHART.

THE storm which had long been threatening China broke in 1900, and, by the order of the Dowager Empress, the Boxer animosity was skilfully turned out of its original channel (against the Manchu dynasty), into one which she imagined would serve her purposes (against foreigners and their religion). She recognised later that this was a fatal blunder. It was indeed her undoing.

Documents were found in Mukden, signed by her, approving the murders of Christians there.* In fact, no attempt was made to conceal the truth that the murder of all foreigners and Chinese Christians was entirely due to her orders. The fact that only in certain provinces were they carried out was due to two things, (i.) That a contrary order was sent to many of the provinces by the magnificent courage of two Chinese secretaries, who deliberately falsified the order so as to save their country from this great crime (as they esteemed it). They were put to a horrible death

* See "The Face of Manchuria, Korea and Russian Turkestan," pp. 23, 24.

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in consequence. (ii.) That in some provinces the Governors were on such good terms with the missionaries and other foreigners that they did not carry out the order. In Chinese Turkestan, for instance, the Governor brought his orders to the British Consul-General, and asked his advice as to what he should do. Instead of putting him and his family to death, he spent a pleasant afternoon drinking tea with them and teaching the lady how to shoot with bows and arrows in the correct Chinese style! In point of fact, it was only in the provinces of Shansi, Chili and Manchuria that there were wholesale massacres, and in Shansi it was entirely due to the ferocity of the noted Governor Yü Hsien, who had encouraged Boxerism for several months, and who himself superintended the massacres at Taiyuanfu, where the majority of the one hundred and fifty-nine foreigners who fell in this province met their death.

All through the summer of 1900 the anxiety of those who had relations in China was intense. The legations in Peking were besieged from June 20th to August 14th, and from time to time the papers published all sorts of stories of the most harrowing kind about Europeans in various parts of the Empire, going so far as to mention names of people said to be murdered, and accounts of the tortures they underwent. No certain news could be obtained, and it was only in the beginning of September that we at last learnt that my sister Jessie, her husband and son, and many, many other friends, had perished.

The girls' school at Taiyuanfu was at that time in the care of a college friend of mine, Edith Coombs. She went

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out in 1898, and although she was aspirant for the post of head mistress of a large and important High School for Girls, she gave it up and felt well recompensed in taking charge of a mere handful of Chinese children, for whom she willingly laid down her life. "I am so happy with the bairns," she wrote, "in spite of all my want of understanding. I get on so well with them that day after day is glad and bright." In one of her last letters to me she said how delighted she was to have gone out. Edith was the first to suffer martyrdom; she had gone back into the school, from which the children were fleeing, because she had learnt that two girls with sore feet had not come out. She brought out one and returned for the other. The angry mob greeted her return with the second child by a volley of stones. She tried to cover the frightened girl with her own body—two of the children were trampled to death. She stumbled and fell, but comforted the child with the words, "Don't fear, we shall soon be in Heaven, where we shall meet again." The child was dragged from her, and she was thrust back into the burning house; three times this was done before the end came, and she passed into the shining city.*

"The door of death is made of gold
That mortal eyes cannot behold—
But when the mortal eyes are closed
And cold and pale the limbs reposed
The soul awakes and wondering sees

* See "Fire and Sword in Shansi," by Dr. Edwards, pp. 207-210, etc. The whole account of the sufferings is graphically given in this volume.

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In her mild hands the golden keys.
The grave is Heaven's golden gate
And rich and poor around it wait."—W. BLAKE.

Florence had been so happy at having such a teacher for the girls' school, and every one felt the influence of her happy, sunny nature ; we hoped that long years of usefulness were before her, and that the school would take a new lease of life under her able management, but now the flock was all scattered, and it seemed as if the work had utterly perished. Some of the children were taken as slaves, others escaped to their homes at Shouyang. The Christian photographer wrote about the former : "Three of these are at the home of the woman called Shih, who keeps them by restraint and will not hand them over (to their friends). Pao Chü has already been defiled by men in an unendurable manner, Chia Loh has been sold to a man, Ch'eo is still at the house of the woman Shih, Fu Yung has been stolen and sold. If a telegram can be sent to the Governor of Shansi, these four girls can be recovered. The sooner these children are saved, the less will they be defiled. At present the Christians are still suffering. With houses burned, their friends killed, their property looted, their grain stolen, yet forced again to pay the temple taxes, no one inquires into their case. They will soon be either frozen or starved to death. The officials still expect them to pay the taxes. Pray quickly have a telegram sent to the Governor to say that the Christians need not this year pay the taxes, as they have passed through such heavy troubles. The Christians of Fenchoufu, Taiyuanfu, Hsinchou, and

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Taichou—together fifteen districts, amounting to more than four thousand people—have had eight-tenths or nine-tenths of their property destroyed. We have also had a very bad year (famine), and if we do not obtain relief by next spring, all the Christians will starve. We trust that at an early date our pastors may be able to return to Shansi, by the grace of God to help His Church.”

This letter was written to Dr. Edwards the following February, and of course the appeal was not made in vain. He had already gone out to China to see what could be done, and in May was in Peking with Dr. Morison (of *The Times*), Sir Robert Hart, Dr. Timothy Richard, consulting with the Chinese authorities and the British Minister what measures should be taken. The new Governor of Shansi was a friend of the Reformers, and he begged that “a man of peace” be sent up. Dr. Richard wrote: “As it happened, Dr. Edwards was most keen on going. We might search all China in vain for a better man of peace than he; he is a most delightful colleague to work with. I therefore put the regulations we had drawn up in the hands of Dr. Edwards, and so the party left with the approval of all. Letters have reached us since; the journal of Moir Duncan gave a most graphic account of the magnificent reception which they had all along the road, culminating in a grand turn-out of all the city officials, gentry and people to give welcome to the missionaries, who had been so woefully wronged just twelve months previously there. Dr. Edwards wired me that everything was progressing most satisfactorily. . . . Thus you see the darkness of the cross

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seems to be gradually lifting. Even the heathen seem to begin to see its glory. The native papers in Shanghai are very loud in their praise of the regulations drawn up for Shansi. If it proves satisfactory we shall thank God for the wisdom He gave us. Before leaving Peking, Li Hung Chang begged us to draw up regulations for the settlement of religious troubles in the whole Empire" (August 1st, 1901).

Dr. Edwards succeeded in gathering together the scattered remnants of his flock, including the schoolgirls, of whom seven were placed in the American School in Peking. All the mission buildings having been destroyed, it was necessary to start building again from the beginning, and in 1903 Dr. and Mrs. Edwards took up the work once more. They started in March from Bordighera, and went by the Siberian Railway, which was not yet entirely completed. She writes in the train—"March 25th, 1903. The snowy landscape covered with small leafless trees (mostly, I think, willows, birches, elms) under a grey sky, form a charming study in neutral tint, and almost as great a contrast as one could imagine to the lovely garden of glowing colour and soft greens along the blue Mediterranean. Perhaps the quiet colours are more in consonance with our tone of mind after putting so great and increasing a distance between us and our dearest, but you must not think we are melancholy—far from it. When we begin to count our mercies we never come to the end, and the key of praise still fits the door to comfort and gladness."

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It was rather heart-breaking work to begin again, the more so as all the truest and best of the Christians had been put to death, and about those who remained there was inevitably a feeling that their safety was probably due to some act of denial. It was made as easy as possible in many instances for Christians to compromise their faith and to have their lives spared on payment of fines, etc. On this account Dr. Edwards and the other missionaries felt that it was best to consider the church as non-existent, and for the few surviving church members to apply (if they so desired it) for re-admission. The school was re-started by Miss Shekleton, with some of the old scholars, and as far as possible the scattered Christian communities in the villages were visited, and the comfort and sympathy they craved were carried to them.

In June, Florence wrote to her mother from Taiyuanfu :—

“ My thoughts are always very specially with you and the children on Sundays. I often wish for them (how often, too, for you !), but have never felt a moment's doubt as to having done the right thing in leaving them at home. Not that we are apprehensive of danger, but we seem to be beginning again with pioneering work. It is not, however, altogether like pioneering work, for there are so many people who know us and are friendly. They are constantly praising H. to me, and I hope it is not *all* flattery, though part no doubt is ; for instance, yesterday a woman was saying, ‘ All Shansi people say the doctor is good—he managed things so well for us after the troubles, not like the Roman Catholics,’ with a very expressive wave of the hand in abhorrence of them. . . . Neo Hsiao's sister, Mrs. Pong and Hsimei and I set off in a cart to visit a blind old Church member near the west gate. A crowd of women,

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children and several men came in to see us, and there were many more in the court, some peeping in through a hole they had licked in the window. The soldier* was very busy keeping them in order, and I had to interfere, and afterwards, while driving home, reprove him for frightening the children. 'Oh,' said Mrs. Ma, 'they aren't frightened of *him*; he grew up in their street, and they all know him and like him.' They listened very well, but there didn't seem to be one who could read in all the crowd. They wanted us to come again, so I hope to go soon and get Mr. Ch'eng to go too, and speak to the men. I can't tell you how glad we are to have them (the Ch'engs) working here. He preaches every afternoon in the open air and takes his accordion to attract a crowd, which very soon gathers. He is very much struck with the quiet attention the people give to his addresses. I don't think he ever scarcely hears a bad word. I think he must be well adapted for that work. Mrs. C., whom I found talking to Miss S. on my return, said she thought he mostly spoke about the love of Christ. . . . To-day there were over thirty women and girls at chapel."

Mr. Ch'eng was a Chinese pastor under the C.I.M., working in another part of the province; he married a Swedish missionary in 1898, with the full consent of her family, and Dr. and Mrs. Edwards stood by them loyally through a very difficult time, incurring with them an extraordinarily keen antagonism from the missionaries, to the dismay of the Chinese Christians; the wedding was not even allowed to take place in the Chapel, and both Mr. and Mrs. Ch'eng were obliged to leave the mission! It may be

* By the express wish of the Chinese officials, they always had a soldier on guard at this time; often a great nuisance.

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considered undesirable to have mixed marriages (unquestionably it causes grave difficulties), but to treat this as a crime is absurd, and most naturally is resented by the Chinese. How can one expect them to listen to our message if we behave in such a manner ?

Along with much discouragement in their work of reconstruction, there were bright gleams to cheer the workers' hearts. In the same letter we read—

“ Miss S. and I were just starting out to do some visiting this afternoon when two Church members from a village were announced. One was an old schoolboy of Mr. Farthing's—now teacher of the school at the village where the other man belongs. This other man and two friends, the only Church members of the village, practically built their little place of worship themselves ! We only got off at 4.45, and returned within a few minutes of each other three hours later. Miss S. had had a wonderful experience ; two ladies, Hu and Ho, to whom, as I think I told you, Hsimei had given their first reading lesson a little while ago, were able to read nine chapters (short ones) almost without a mistake, and knew two hymns the husband had taught them. We have never known such a thing before. We were lamenting over these ladies a few days before to Mrs. D. because they asked me to introduce them to her, apparently only that they might beg Mrs. D.'s good offices with the Fu-tai (Governor) to get the husband a post—they had already appealed to H. in vain. Mrs. D. said it seemed as if Mrs. R.'s lament was true, that if you work among the poor they beg for food and clothes, and if you work among the rich they ask for office ! It is very natural of course, and should fill one with deep compassion for them.”

She revisited the home whence Jessie and her loved

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ones went on the last sorrowful journey to martyrdom, and writes thus to a friend—

“ Shouyang,

“ October 30th, 1904.

“ MY DEAREST ANNIE,

“ It is time I was going to bed, for which I feel very ready, but I feel I must first thank you for the sweet song, six copies of which arrived this afternoon. I know that you will be glad to hear that it came just when I needed its cheering, strengthening words. I took them to heart, and was much helped. I went with the song in my hand to what was our darling Jessie's bedside, and, kneeling there, got real comfort and strength, especially from the words, 'Let nought thy heart dismay, Christ is thy shield and stay.' I have very generally a very faint heart, so much so that the 'grasshopper is a burden'; however, your clarion note 'courage, faint heart, take cheer' is ringing in my mind, and I hope I shall keep acting on it.

“ On Friday I mounted our loved one's old Brownie, and, accompanied on donkeys by Mr. Wang, who used to be Ellen Brown's teacher, and Wang-da-sao, dear Jessie's housemaid her last three weeks here, went to Peiliangsan, the photo of which is in 'Fire and Sword.' It was a rather cold three hours' ride, snowing a little part of the time, but I got warm by walking some distance, and it was well worth going. The old man who sheltered the fugitives in 1900 gave us a hearty welcome, and we had a good opportunity of talking with two of his sons, and a few others. Most of the inhabitants of the little village are afraid of another outbreak, and perhaps consequently opposed to the Truth, refusing to listen even. I can't help thinking if we could go frequently and have quiet talks there, their prejudice would be overcome. In one house I went into, which has the reputation of being strongly anti-Christian, they were quite pleasant. One explanation of that is, however, that they wanted me to prescribe for them and send medicine. I was able to do so, and sent the medicine to-day by good old

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Mr. Yen, when he came to worship. He does not generally come here (it is ten or twelve miles), but joins the tiny band of Christians at Peiho, only a few miles' walk. There, there is one baptized Christian and several inquirers. A good many were martyred in that district. We went on there for the night, arriving just at dark, and were hospitably entertained in a wonderfully clean room by good farmer Li and his wife. The next day before sunrise he set out with me to see one of the girls I brought back from Peking, who is to go to Miss S.'s school. It took us forty minutes to go. We had a good talk with them, and in the house of the widow of another martyr, who, with her two sons, seems to have altogether backslidden, poor things, if they ever were Christians. Oh ! how they need our love and compassion ! One feels what can a passing visit like that do ! But the Holy Spirit can use it.

“After breakfast at farmer Li's we paid two or three visits in another village, one to a very nice couple, foster-parents of our little schoolboy Nai Man, whose father, mother and brothers were killed. Then we rode back to Shouyang, about seventeen or eighteen miles, arriving a little before sunset. I am so thankful to be very well and strong, much the better in body and spirit for my month here.”

Thus little by little the spiritual work was built up ; hospital, houses for the staff, school, chapel buildings were erected to meet the needs, but the poignant past made everything more difficult, and the strength of youth was no longer theirs. Both Dr. and Mrs. Edwards felt that the time had come when the work at Taiyuanfu should be united in one mission, and they offered themselves to the only Society working there, namely, the Baptist Missionary Society (in 1907), which gladly welcomed them into their midst. Later on they handed over the whole of the

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Taiyuanfu property as a gift to the Society, feeling that this was the best way to ensure the continuation of their life-work.

Florence still laboured with unremitting zeal, always haunted by the thought that there was so little time in which to achieve so vast a work. A fellow-worker of those days tells me she was always up by five o'clock in order to have time for prayer and Bible study before the work of the day, and she was the last to retire at night, often writing or reading till nearly midnight. Across the river she had a little group of women in a village whose interest she had succeeded in arousing, and she went as frequently as possible to instruct them with all care in the truths of Christianity ; after she left China in 1906, no fewer than four were baptized, and this became the nucleus of a church. They had to endure much persecution from their neighbours, and the acceptance of Christianity was no easy matter. One woman said to another missionary that a neighbour had taunted her almost beyond endurance till she felt she *must* hurl a shoe at her, standing in the doorway. " Then," she said, " I thought of Mrs. Edwards' face, and I couldn't do it."

One of the most beautiful converts of this period is a Biblewoman, Mrs. Chang, and I feel that the account of her given by Nurse Rossiter, of the Woman's Hospital at Taiyuanfu, is so graphic that I venture to quote it in full.

" One of our Biblewomen, Mrs. Chang, has been with us since the hospital was formally opened, and the story of how she first began to be won to the Gospel is a very interesting one. In 1900 she was in this city when the Chinese

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Christians and the missionaries were killed, and she told us that when she heard that they were killed she clapped her hands and was glad. Although she was sure there was something better than idols to worship, she felt that those who had died had not the truth. She said, 'I had a heart like Paul—consenting to their death.' Her old mother, who has recently died in hospital, was grieved about one thing at that time, and that was that they killed so many little children. For that reason she thought the thing wrong.

"A year or more passed, and the missionaries came back, and, strange to say, Mrs. Chang's husband (who is not a Christian even now) wished her, or rather told her (for that is what husbands do in China) to go to church. She went, and one of the lady missionaries there (Mrs. Edwards), finding that Mrs. Chang could read a little, asked her where she lived. Mrs. Chang decided that if she was to be asked such personal questions she would not go again to church. However, here again her husband insisted, and she went. Then this missionary invited her and her step-daughter to her house to tea.

"Neither of them wanted to go, and on the way there decided that they would neither eat nor drink in the foreigner's house. But once again they changed their minds when told by this dear lady that she had made the cakes herself, and that in case they were not to their liking she had bought some Chinese cakes, which they would be sure to like. In short, the 'niceness' of the lady overcame their prejudice, and from that time onwards they learnt more and more of the love of God. To-day we reap

DESTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION

the benefit for the Hospital, for we have a very faithful helper and friend in this woman.

“Mrs. Chang is a deaconess in the church, and she never forgets what she was like once. If an over-dressed, powdered woman comes into hospital, Mrs. Chang will say, ‘Yes, I was just like that once. It is because they don’t understand the Gospel.’ Neither does she forget those who told her of the Old, Old Story.

“The story of the hospital helpers would hardly be complete if one omitted to speak of dear little ‘True-love,’ who is so loved by all. She was born in hospital just two years ago this July. Her mother was quite unable to support her, and as she was a girl, the question was, ‘Who wants her?’ One day it occurred to us that perhaps Mrs. Chang would have her, so accordingly we talked it over, and Mrs. Chang said, ‘I have been thinking about it too, and since she is a girl, there will be no question when she gets big of her not being able to live in a women’s hospital. Yes, I should like to adopt her.’ And from that time ‘True Love’ has had all the love showered upon her that a little girl could have.

“‘True Love’ is always spoken of by hospital people as ‘Our True Love,’ as if she were universal property. She is a charming wee thing, and a model of good health and cleanliness. She can already sing two lines of ‘Jesus loves me,’ and the sight of a book of any kind sets her singing it.

“Mrs. Chang’s own little daughter, ‘Precious,’ acts quite the big sister. ‘Precious’ is about ten years old and goes to the Mission School. She was Dr. Lewis’s first

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patient in China, and when asked by her mother what she intended to give to the Lewis Memorial Fund, she said, 'I have no money, but when I get big I will help to nurse the patients in those wards.' "

In 1906 Dr. and Mrs. Edwards returned to England and took their family to Switzerland for some eighteen months, making Lausanne their head-quarters. Then they returned to Edinburgh, and made a home there for the children, as I have mentioned in Chapter Seven. The last chapter is a brief account of the closing years of Florence's pilgrimage, full of bodily suffering, but of an ever-deepening peace. In a letter to a friend she says: " I sometimes think that when we look back upon this life from the blessed eternity before us it will seem so very short, just as Moses describes it in the 90th Psalm, and Paul when he speaks of 'our light affliction which is but for a moment,' so that it will not make much difference if we have been doing the will of God, whether we have spent it in one place or in another—at one work or another. It is perhaps easy for me, who have so much to make life pleasant, to write thus, but I think it is true. Your life is a specially hard and self-denying one, much more so than a great many out in China, and the Lord says to you, 'I know where thou dwellest' and 'I know their sorrows.' "

A missionary who was living with her at this time writes: " Mrs. Edwards' life was one continual pouring out of herself for others, and as she worked so quietly she left her mark in the hearts and lives of men and women, and not on movements and organisations."



GEORGE K. EDWARDS AND FLORENCE



OLD FALANGE

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUNSET

" My soul would leave this heavy clay

Run up with joy the shining way
To embrace my dearest Lord."

THE years spent with her children, watching their development and sharing their joys and cares, were very happy ones, especially as they all fulfilled Florence's ambition in choosing to follow their parents' career of service ; she knew so well how to prepare them for it, and she had such rich stores of experience from which to draw. Despite all the suffering and repeated disappointments of hope proving false, she did rejoice continually. Looking one day from a window to the beautiful moors round the old home, she spoke of happy childhood, but added, " but not as happy as now." She never talked of her suffering, or of her dread—for she did feel dread of the " last enemy to be overthrown"—but bore both with unfaltering courage.

When she first became conscious of threatening disease, Dr. Edwards was again away at his work in China, and she awaited his return to consult a surgeon (1910) ; an operation was performed successfully by an eminent Edinburgh man, and it was hoped that the evil was eradicated. She

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made so good a recovery and seemed so well that in 1913 they decided once more to visit China, not with' the intention of settling down, but of encouraging their friends at Taiyuanfu and seeing something of the work in other parts of the field. They took out with them their prospective daughter-in-law, that she might study the language and prepare herself for service before her marriage ; this was the right course, in their opinion, for all missionaries' wives. Although she was an Edinburgh M.A., and held a diploma for teaching, by my sister's advice she took a year's training at Carey Hall (the united College for Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists), and then one and a half years in China before her marriage. Florence frequently regretted she had had so little training herself, and urged it not only for Biblical study, but for methods of teaching and the rudiments of music, even for unmusical people. She used to say that it was only people exceptionally gifted who had succeeded in missionary work without training, and that in all probability they might have done more had they been properly equipped, and, in any case, their task would have been less arduous. Dr. Garvie, in a recent speech on this subject, pointed out that if a man missionary was obliged to take a four years' training as a *minimum*, it was surely not unreasonable to put a three-years' course as a *maximum* (at present) for a woman missionary. I have never met a case of regret on the part of any missionary for the time spent on training, but I have continually been struck with the sorrowful plaint, "If only I had been trained how much easier the

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work would be, and how much less time would have been wasted!" Training is urgently needed both at home and in the field *before* marriage, for it is usually quite impossible to get any thorough training after marriage, either for man or wife.

Dr. and Mrs. Edwards left Edinburgh at the end of July, and she writes to a friend about all the worries and anxieties of giving up their happy home there, with all that it entailed.

"When I get a little worried I think of the fruit of the Spirit ('love, joy, peace, patience towards others, kindness, benevolence, good faith, meekness, self-restraint,' which A. McC. asks everybody to repeat and think over for a few moments every day. I scarcely dare think of the approaching parting, but I know it is best, and that God will bless it to Robert as well as to the others. He wouldn't tell us to pray in faith unless He was certain of answering. . . . I don't feel I have 'calm faith' or anything good, but I yet feel thankful to be blessed in my unworthiness by the Saviour of *sinners*. Oh! I do love that word of Charlotte Elliot's:

" 'Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, *all I need in Thee to find*,
Oh, Lamb of God, I come.'

"Another thing has helped me greatly during the last few days; we had a farewell meeting on Thursday at Rose Street, and I said a few words, among which it came into my mind to say the Apostle Paul gloried in his infirmities that the power of Christ might rest upon him, and that I had many more infirmities and greater ones than his to glory in. Afterwards it struck me as a matter of fact that I really never have gloried in my infirmities, quite the opposite. So now do pray for me that I may do it, not in order that I may *obtain* the power,

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but that it *may rest* upon me, and God alone be glorified. These days I am seeing that I must not worry because of any of my infirmities, deafness, lack of memory, or power of mind to grasp things, or of physical power."

They went out via Siberia, after spending the summer holidays in the Hartz Mountains, and saying good-bye to their young people at Berlin. The autumn was spent in Shantung, visiting a number of mission stations, and doing some speaking and tract distributing. That it was not entirely an easy and comfortable trip may be gathered from the following letter written by Florence on the Yellow River :

" November 7th, 1913.

" DEAREST M.,

" The bottom of this boat is an ideal place for writing—also for reading, but I think I must do my writing first. We are very comfortably ensconced in our little pen which Dr. B. (very inaccurately, I think) terms a rabbit-hutch—anyhow, it is altogether different from the double-roomed hutches with attics that our rabbits dwelt in! I sit on the 'concertina' and your father on the hold-all. Dr. B. has a smaller pen on one side, and I can just see his head reading 'The Student Movement' while Djang-Dung-Li has one on the other side, where he has been lying rolled up like a chrysalis in his wadded quilt.

" We have a few minutes since crossed over quite a rough piece of water, which the boatman explained was caused by rocks below disturbing the current. Then he said there had been a city there which the river in altering its course ten or twelve years ago had destroyed. . . .

" November 11th.

" Now we are actually again on the Yellow River—this time on a ferry-boat, with two carts and my sedan chair en

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route for Chouping. It is a beautiful day and the river quite calm. We left Peichen about 8.30, after I had had a hasty look round the Boys' School, dormitories, bathroom, kitchen, and dining-room. Sunday services are held in the large school-room, a little group of women sitting in front, and the sides and back occupied by men and boys. The work extending over a large stretch of country with eight village churches and pastors, and 14,000 members, not many women come to the services at Peichen. We had a little meeting of a dozen, to whom I spoke of the Fruit of the Spirit after morning service. They said they had all fully understood your father's sermon. Dr. H. preached in the afternoon, and in the evening we had the Communion Service in English in the G.s' sitting-room, Mr. S. leading it. It was very sweet and solemn, a real uplift. I thought of the last time we were at the Lord's Table at Rochdale, all together.

"Evening. After being laboriously towed a short distance up the bank, the cart, mules, and a donkey were brought on board. Mr. G. and Mr. S. S. waved their good-byes, and little Jimmy his from his donkey, and we were soon rowed across. About three hours riding and walking brought us to an inn in a little town where a market was being held, mainly of cotton in the pod. We saw many people out in the fields gathering it, but the harvest is about over. Near villages there were patches of onions, carrots, cabbages, mustard, etc. We halted to mend my chair close to a heap of beautiful carrots, which a man had just dug up; he looked on quite complacently while the men each helped himself to two or three and began munching them. I asked if they didn't give him any money. 'Oh, no!' said one.

"Several women came and sat down with me in the tiny room assigned to us, but they considerably departed when we were ready to prepare for lunch. . . .

"As the afternoon wore on, my chair kept needing to be mended, and finally the front bar uniting the poles broke, so it was impossible to ride in it; happily we were only three or four miles from our destination, and not far from a village,

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where the people were very friendly, and we soon got another bar. While the mending was being done, a nice woman invited me into her court, and a crowd of children and men gathered, but I'm afraid they didn't understand a great deal of what I said! It was nearly dark when we reached this place (Kao-Yuan), and your father and Dr. B. had come out to see what had happened to us, the cart having had to take a different road. Mr. G. had to send two small carts for boxes, so it was fortunate our journey fitted in with their going. This is an out-station, with a little boarding-school."

After visiting the various Baptist Mission stations in Shantung, they went to Taiyuanfu, December, 13th, 1913, and in the course of the spring saw the work in Shansi stations. Owing to the activity of "White Wolf" and other robbers in Shensi, they were obliged to give up their intention of going there, otherwise they had planned to make a survey of the whole work of the Baptist Mission in China—namely, in the three provinces where our work lies. It had already long been felt to be highly desirable that the various missions in other lands should confine themselves to defined areas, so as to prevent overlapping and the friction caused by conflicting claims.* In one sense this put a much greater responsibility on the missions, by making them responsible for the working of the fields committed to their care, and it is a matter which ought to

* "The work is a campaign of allies; yet many of the allies are ignorant of what the others are doing. Overlapping and competition are to be found in certain districts in the mission field, while other vast territories remain practically untouched."—World Missionary Conference, vol. viii. p. 7; see also pp. 12, 13.

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fill the Christian Church with shame and grief, that the depletion of our ranks by the Boxer massacre has never been made good, although the martyrs relied on the Church to do this. Herbert Dixon (of the B.M.S.) in his last message to the evangelist Chao, said, "There is perhaps one chance in a hundred that we may escape, but if we must die, we are not afraid. If the Lord bids us, we will cheerfully lay down our lives for His sake. All the missionaries are in the same danger, but if we are all killed and not one escape, there are many more who will be certain to take our place."

Mrs. B. tells me that as soon as it was known that Mrs. Edwards was back, people came from far and near, of whose existence she knew nothing, although she had been working for many years in Taiyuanfu. They were people of every class, and all were welcomed with the same loving sympathy and patient readiness to enter into their interests, while they all talked for hours and hours, and drank countless cups of tea.

A Scotch friend on a visit to China at this time writes : We saw how the Chinese women loved Mrs. Edwards. I remember one very beautiful testimony, though somewhat quaint in its setting. Mrs. Edwards had been speaking at a conference of women on our Lord's second coming. One of the older school girls went home and looked at herself in the glass. Her mother asked what she was doing. The girl replied she was looking if she were ready if Christ came, and she thought she was not. Her mother (who has a bad temper) asked if her daughter thought

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she was ready ! ‘ Oh, no ! ’ was the reply. ‘ You are not ready ; your face is not the least like Mrs. Edwards ! *Her* face shows she is quite ready.’ One could hardly see your dear sister without finding one or other of her many gifts exemplified.”

The above letter refers to one of the salient traits in my sister’s character—her continual realisation of the possibility of the coming of her Lord. I do not think a day passed without her thinking of it with eager anticipation, and she often spoke of it.

Dr. Edwards was far from well during the winter, and had an attack of bronchitis in May, which hastened their departure from Taiyuanfu to their little house at Pei-ta-ho, a seaside resort much frequented in the summer by the foreign community at Peking and elsewhere. A little incident of the journey is characteristic of Florence’s happy way of winning confidences, and is told in a letter, dated June 7th, 1914 :

“ The ticket collector on the train turned out to be one of Dr. Lavington Hart’s boys ; they have to speak English. His parents were Christians, and he had been ‘ brought up as a Christian ’ but he said he really is one by conviction. He came and had two chats with me, and said he would pay us a call. He said in his rather quaint English that he would like to ask me a favour ; it was that I would pray for him. He never scarcely gets a Sunday off duty, and he said, ‘ You know, it is so difficult for us to keep right ; we have so many temptations.’ I was the more glad of having the compartment to myself.

“ At 5.30 we reached Pei-ta-ho station, and found the C.’s

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and our caretaker with his donkey and bright little boy of twelve and a chair in which I did the two hours to East Cliff most luxuriously, walking now and then. Old Peng had brought a most kind note from Mrs. Dr. Emma Tucker, whose house is ten minutes walk from ours, saying she would be awaiting me to supper and a bed !

“ There was a delicious breeze blowing from the sea, and the distant jagged mountains looked very fine—the country is like what one sees in many places near the sea, and rather poor soil, but quite a number of willows, some clumps of fir trees by graves. In a little hollow we passed a herd of eight or ten cattle, with two or three dear little brown calves browsing on the lush grass by a rivulet. After about an hour we caught sight of the sea and a white steamer at anchor a long way off. It was so chilly, I was glad to put on my Burberry. Djang-Dung-Li rode the donkey, which entertained us frequently to not too melodious music ! There were quite a number of skittish donkeys trotting along. At 7.30 the chair was set down at the foot of a little hill, ending in some craggy rocks by the sea, where the boats were just coming to shore. On the hill I saw Mrs. T. and her little boy and girl of eight and six ; they were gathering wild yellow lilies. At the house we found a milkman wanting custom, and a grocer’s man, and several soldiers who are on police duty. We sat on the low wall of the verandah, and Mrs. T. helped me to settle with the grocer and the milkman. Then Djang shouldered my suit-case, and we walked down the steep, sandy cliff, and along the shell-strewn shore, where little white wavelets were gleaming in the moonlight, then over another low headland to Mrs. T.’s house, which is closer down to the sea than ours and has rocks just below it. . . . It is a very nice house, built last year and given to Mrs. T. by her father.”

The rest of happy days at the seaside, surrounded by congenial friends, was broken in upon by the thunderclap

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of war, and at the same time the blow of a return of the dreaded disease brought Florence face to face with all that it implied. She felt it a terrible burden, but found new strength and serenity in a sense of the presence of God. Speaking of the fact that she sometimes woke up with a feeling of dreadful depression, she said that she just thought about God, and the whole aspect of everything changed. It was not that you had to *do* anything, but leave it to God to work in you. Certainly everyone felt that she habitually lived in the very presence of God ; she exemplified Faber's lines :

“ If our love were but more simple,
We should take him at his word ;
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord.”

They returned at once to England, and consulted the surgeon who had performed the operation in 1910 ; his verdict was, “ I can do nothing further. All I can say to you, Mrs. Edwards, is that you must face the future with the same courage with which you have always faced it.” Other treatment was tried, but nothing was of any permanent avail. For two more years she was spared to those who loved her so well, and was ever full of vivid sympathy with every form of human suffering, of which these war years have been so full. The longing to share in it made her willingly spare Dr. Edwards during the summer of 1915 to go and care for the French wounded in my little English hospital at Arc-en-Barrois, where he acted as

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resident officer. Meanwhile, she lived with her two sisters at Old Falinge, Rochdale, where her children spent their holidays.

She became weaker as time went on, but always remained serene and bright, as if she had no pain or care, and from the autumn of 1915 was nursed entirely by her husband and daughter, and by the household (at their own wish). She was not able to study her Bible as much as was her wont, and therefore did so at different hours—after breakfast, instead of before, and in the afternoon instead of the evening—namely, when her powers were at their best. She would not treat it as a fetish, but with a wide rational consideration; she used to advise that for such a purpose the student should make herself thoroughly comfortable as to easy chair and table, so as to be able to concentrate the whole attention on the Bible.

In one of her last letters to a friend, dated June 15th, 1916, she writes :

“ I feel that we haven’t relied enough on prayer instead of our own strivings to change things—at least, I haven’t, and now there is but little time left me.”

* * * * *

“ I can write with less difficulty than speak, but am very weak, just seeking to rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. Every day I think I feel more thankful to Him and rejoice and hope in Him more and more, and rest upon Him and His sure word of Truth.”

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At the beginning of August, 1916, I received word in Paris that it would be well for me to return at once to see her again, and I had a few quiet, happy days with her before the end came. She was still able to come down and spend a few hours in the drawing-room every day and take her share in the interests of the many people who came to the house, even to the very last day. We had no thought when we bade her good-night that it was also good-bye ; but just as we were going to bed the summons came, and without a sigh, surrounded by her dear ones, and held in her husband's arms, she "fell on sleep."

She was laid in the family grave where her father and mother lie, on August 9th, 1916 ; as is the custom of the family, there was no funeral pomp or ceremony or mourning, but the coffin was carried on one of the lorries belonging to the firm, with only a few flowers on it, given her by her most intimate friends and family. She had entered into *Joy*, and we rejoiced with her. If her Chinese friends could add their tribute to her worth, there is no question what it would be, and perhaps it could be no more forcibly stated than in the instance with which I close this little memoir. An American sect tried to persuade the Chinese Christians that they alone had the gift of the Holy Spirit ; but the reply (which no one could gainsay) was, " That cannot be true ; every one knows that Mrs. Edwards had the Holy Spirit."

"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord . . . their works do follow them."

EPILOGUE

GEORGE KEMP EDWARDS

O TAIYUANFU! will your deaf ears at last listen to the call of love and sacrifice? Once more a life has been laid down for you ungrudgingly, in all the beauty of its youth and strength. While the story of his mother's life was passing through the press, her eldest son paid the price of his too heavily taxed endeavour: after an illness of only two days he entered the gate of death and life.

I think of George as a *child*, and see him ever as a gallant conqueror over self: I see him as a *boy*, somewhat slow but determined to conquer difficulties. As a mountain climber nothing daunted him. One of the Scottish climbers said of him when he was only twenty—"he is one of the coming men," to which one of the premier climbers replied—"he is already *come*." I see him at the Edinburgh University degree day, gay and triumphant, receiving his hard-won laurels. I see him as house-surgeon at the Rochdale Infirmary, quietly and unostentatiously bringing order and a new efficiency into that slow-going institution, so that patients said "no one need be afraid of going into hospital now that Dr. Edwards is there."

I see him finally setting out for Taiyuanfu, his birth-place, to carry on the old tradition of loving labour with the expectation of long years to be spent in the service

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of man. He longed to take part in the Great War as a surgeon at the front, but bowed to the decision of those who felt that his duty was at Taiyuanfu, and nobly fulfilled his trust, without any word of regret. The intolerable strain of hard work and anxiety aged him rapidly. In the winter of 1918, he succeeded in arresting the plague (which was invading China from the north) in the section of the line which was under his care. After three months he returned to his work at Taiyuanfu, which consisted of the entire charge of the men's and women's hospitals, and the foreign community generally ; with only the help of a newly qualified student from the medical school at Tsinanfu.

He was taken ill on the evening of April 30th, after a very heavy day's work, with what was probably acute cerebro-spinal fever ; his Chinese assistant attended him, and he had skilled and devoted nursing, but no foreign doctor could be got till a few hours before his death, two days later. Quietly he fell on sleep, having fulfilled his course—a three years' ministry like that of his Master. His fellow-workers are best able to say what his life in China was like, and the effect of it upon the Chinese, for whom he had given up all the worldly ambitions, which appeal to every high-hearted young man entering into life.

In a letter from his widow is the following account of what the Chinese felt about him : “ The sympathy of the Chinese has been beautiful. Deng Mei and Mrs. Liu P'ai Yuan have both been to see me, and have wept with me. They all say he *gave his life for the Chinese*—never a call refused, nothing left undone that would alleviate or

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help. Mrs. Chang, the hospital Biblewoman, was in yesterday, too, and she said that when she heard he was so ill she prayed that God would take her instead, as he could do so much more to help every one. The whole foreign community in the city, British, American, tobacco men (whom he attended several times), P.O. men, etc., all have been moved very deeply. . . . This we can all be thankful for, that he was his mother's true son out here, and certainly a portion of her spirit was upon him, and in spite of the many trials and difficulties he had out here in the hospital, I feel sure the Chinese realised it. His deepest longing and prayer (voiced so often at our own private prayer and mission meetings) was that the hospital should really *save men*—their souls as well as their bodies—and he felt it so that he could not do more himself in the way of taking meetings, etc. But he lived a life, and that tells most after all."

He was laid to rest the day after his death in the foreign cemetery outside the city walls, beside his two brothers. A fellow worker writes : " At the funeral services which were held on May 3rd, a large company gathered to pay their last respects to the memory of one who had given himself so whole-heartedly for the welfare of Chinese and foreigners alike. Of the Chinese officials the following were either present in person or sent representatives :—His Excellency the Governor, the Head of the Provincial Assembly, the Chief Justice, the Provincial Minister of Industries, the Head of the Detective Bureau, the Provincial Minister of Finance, the President and professors of the Shansi

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University, the President of the Technical College, and the Government services (postal, Salt Gabelle, etc.).”

The Chinese memorial service was held in the courtyard of the men’s hospital, the coffin being covered with British and Chinese flags. Then the gathering followed it to its last resting place, the martyrs’ cemetery outside the city. “The deep sense of loss, and the sympathy for the bereaved, which had been so very manifest at the Chinese service, seemed to have affected even the bearers on the way to the cemetery, for they went along with a reverence and in a solemn orderliness that was quite remarkable ; and at the graveside there was none of the confusion that so often jars on one’s feelings at Chinese funerals. The bright, warm sunshine, the evergreen of the pines and firs, and the fresh beauty of the trees that have just burst into life again were fitting emblems of the fields that know no sorrow . . . the realm and home of life . . . and the dear land of rest. It seemed so hard to realise that our beloved doctor, who came to us so strong and vigorous had been taken from us. How thankful one was that no shadow of discord or regret lay across his grave. His life amongst us had never been marred by anything one would not wish to remember. In all his intercourse with us he had been truly a ‘gallant Christian gentleman,’ and we thank God for the graciousness of his life.”

Dr. Balme, who only arrived from Tsinanfu after George’s death, writes : “ It appears only too plain that there was not the least real resistance on the part of the poor tired body. He seems from the outset to have been utterly

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poisoned by the toxæmia, and to have been quite unable to rally against it. The true fact is that for these last two or three years he has been making a heroic effort to carry a burden of responsibility and anxiety and hard work that was entirely beyond his strength; and when this acute infection struck him, he had not an atom of reserve to call upon.

"From various letters which I have received from time to time it has only been too plain what a heavy strain he had been working under, and how much he was feeling it. But his was a nature that never complained and that would never give in. And so he worked on until he dropped at his post, a victim to the circumstances which this terrible war has imposed everywhere.

"I would love to write about him as I feel, but I simply do not know how to do so. I was attracted to him from the very first time that I met him, and every subsequent meeting deepened my affection and admiration for him. I do not know when I have met a more perfect type of a Christian English gentleman, at once so courteous, so thoughtful and so unselfish. But even more than all this was his marvellous humility, the like of which I have never seen. He always seemed utterly disregarding of his own abilities, and ever esteeming others better than himself. Dr. Liu P'ai Yuan was talking to me about this two nights ago, and telling me that he had often had to remonstrate with George for the way in which he would always treat him (Dr. Liu) as though he knew far more about everything than he did himself. It was just characteristic of George's

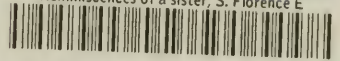
REMINISCENCES OF A SISTER

life out here. He was truly one of the most beautiful characters that I have ever met in a young man, and the lives of all of us who knew him cannot but be the richer for the contact."

Time after time George wrote home urging the need for other doctors, especially for a man of *experience* as well as great capacity, and advising his sister what subjects specially to study before joining him to take charge of the women's hospital; regretting that he had not been able himself to do these things before going to China. As the torch falls from his hand his father takes it up again (going out immediately on demobilisation) till some one else can go, and Dr. Marjory Edwards is designate for the women's work next year; but the field is vast.

Eight of our family already sleep at Taiyuanfu. "I heard the voice of the Lord saying . . . whom shall I send and who will go for us?"

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Reminiscences of a sister.

